"JUPITER JONES"

A Musical Comedy

Book By .....ABEN KANDEL

Lyrics By .....FRANK REARDON

Music By .....ERNEST G. SCHWEIKERT

Registered with
SCREEN WRITERS GUILD
OF AMERICA -- W.

Dramatists Guild

Property of:

BEN BARTON
~~1619 Broadway~~ 309 W. 57 St.
New York 19, N.Y.

~~JU 2-2805~~ CO5-7750

MAIN CHARACTERS

SUZIE.....About 27.	Buxom, shapely, gamine and brash. Employed as combination tourist-bait and tourist guide; curator of the wild west museum, which attracts the tenderfoot's dollar. Weaves in and out of the story, breathing unabashed heat on the hunk of male she wants to lasso.
PEGGY.....About 24.	The heroine of the piece. Intelligent, forthright, proud. Real outdoors beauty with a normal desire to park it indoors - tied to the right man - but - who is the right man?
JOHNNY.....About 25.	OUR HERO; shy, gallant, withdrawn by logic rather than cowardice. Personable of good address, and must be a baritone.
JUPITER JONES.....	The dynamic boarder Johnny takes in. The script will detail his shenanigans.
ROY.....	Western type heavy with tycoon outlook. Is interested in being the fastest gun - only because in his book (bank-book) it is also the fastest buck.
GABE.....About 50.	Professional Western Greeter.
AUNT EUDORA.....About 45.	Johnny's Aunt - plump, out spoken.
VINEY.....	Western Editor - a little man with a big voice.
FLIP.....About 35.	Fast-talking, fast-moving magazine photographer

ANNOUNCER, THE BANKERS, NEWSPAPER MEN, NATIVES, TOURISTS, ETC.

* * *

ACT ONE

Scene 1

After house lights darken ... SPOTLIGHT RIGHT in front on Scrim Drop will pick up the ANNOUNCER of the JAMBOREE and a group of six composed of TWO burly assistants and SUZIE, GABE, VINEY and CLINT all dressed in traditional West. The ANNOUNCER is finishing a pep talk to them. Atmosphere is that of a coach and his team just before the big game begins.

ANNOUNCER
(On a high excited note)
Any minute now -- thousands and thousands of tourists -- will start pushing their way into our little town. For a hundred miles they've been reading banners strung across the highway. WELCOME TO TRUMPET RIVER.

GABE
That's right.

ANNOUNCER
These good folks are exchanging the pressures, the tensions, the hostilities of Big City life for the - pressures, the tensions, the hostilities of life in the Old WEST.

VINEY
How true --

ANNOUNCER
They'll start spending money here - maybe a million more than last year. They're begging for a holiday - a wild time - and we're here to give it -

SUZIE
You mean sell -

ANNOUNCER
And we're here to sell it to them.

ALL
Amen.

ANNOUNCER
They're lucky - and we're lucky - because we've got just what they want - from a saloon brawl to a hanging tree.

ALL
We sure have -

ANNOUNCER
But - best of all - we've got the most beloved badman in history -

SUZIE
He's a little dead ... isn't he?

ANNOUNCER
But his memory will live on forever.
(With dramatic pride)
We've got the wickedest - the shootingest - the killingest -- the most honored desperado ever known.

(BLACKOUT as CURTAIN rises on JUPITER SQUARE in full stage with cast)

ACT ONE

Scene 2

JUPITER SQUARE.

Blackout on upstage and backdrop as scrim curtain goes up. The main set, downstage, is lit up. JUPITER SQUARE. A wild west street of the 1880's but we can see this is hallowed ground. All the old buildings have been preserved intact, - but strongly buttressed to guarantee a long life, and long prosperity. The Museum is the humble cabin in which JUPITER JONES was born, and often returned to - for cached ammunition. It is preserved like a shrine and has been enlarged to accommodate the flow of bug-eyed tourists.

Before it stands a life-size statue of JUPITER JONES - for all he did as a desperado, in marble repose he looks rather small and his face seems quite sensitive. In fact, from time to time when anything takes place on the stage that could upset, revolt or please him, it would seem to a discerning eye that he reacts.

The founding fathers took a few liberties, like adding some rooms to house wax effigies of his gang. Adjoining the humble birthplace is JUPITER's second home, the old jail and courthouse. A few steps further is the stately cottonwood tree from one sacred limb of which JUPITER was finally hung. Beyond is the Pokey-Nine Saloon where they had trouble supplying him with enough liquor. Above the saloon is the Pokey-Nine's one-story hotel where he occasionally indulged in a little masculine entertainment. In front of the Hotel is the Old Hitching Rack where he tied his famous getaway horse, Vinagroo. Then follows the first Rancher's Bank which he held up so many

times he lost track of the count, then a divided store front shared by the TRUMPET RIVER RATTLER, the town newspaper and the WESTERN GOSPEL MISSION, the original Evangelical Church. Off to one side is the Livery Stable and the Blacksmith's Shop. Time has stood still since 1880 for JUPITER JONES and JUPITER SQUARE. Only the money they have made has grown.

VOICE OF ANNOUNCER

Our very own ...

(Right into song: "JUPITER JONES")

SUZIE

(Chorus)
Jupiter Jones
Jupiter Jones
There weren't none like
Jupiter Jones
An' there will never be
Another like
Never be another
Brother like
Jones --
Jupiter Jones

SUZIE & ENSEMBLE

Jupiter Jones
Jupiter Jones
None wur as mean as
Jupiter Jones

SUZIE

Why it's been said that he
Wur mean to the
Reckon he wur mean
Right clean to the
Bones ---

CAST

Jupiter Jones

COWBOYS

With a yippie ki o
An' a yippie ki a
The roughest toughest hombre'
Of his day

"JUPITER JONES" - (Cont'd)

SUZIE

The women folk
Wur more content
To them he wur
The perfect gent

2ND COWBOY

Oh he may-a kicked
An' roughed 'em some --
But never killed
A one of 'um

CAST

Jupiter Jones
Jupiter Jones
There weren't none like
Jupiter Jones
An' there will never be
Another like
Never be another
Brother like
Jones
Jupiter Jones

LAWYER

(Steps out from group)

My dad was his lawyer - he was only tried once. When the prosecutor accused him of killing 67 people not counting relatives - my dad pleaded - self-defense. When the prosecutor yelled how come they were shot in the back? My dad came right back and said - everybody knows Jupiter Jones was a mighty tricky shooter. And the jury got the message. They voted NOT GUILTY.

CAST

Jupiter Jones
Jupiter Jones
There weren't none like
Jupiter Jones
An' there will never be
Another like
Never be another
Brother like
Jones
Jupiter Jones

DOCTOR

(Steps out from group)

My dad picked eighteen bullets out of him, sewed him up a dozen times. But what he really needed was - an analyst.

(Wistfully)

If only - I could have gotten Jupiter Jones on my couch. I'm sure I would have cured him. I would have turned him into an honest man!

CHORUS

(Quickly)

God forbid!

CAST

Jupiter Jones
Jupiter Jones
There weren't none like
Jupiter Jones
An' there will never be
Another like
Never be another
Brother like
Jones
Jupiter Jones

PREACHER

(Steps out from group)

But the good Lord is known
For his forgivin'ness
What if Jupiter
Forgot the words he spoke
Why far back as I can search --
He would never rob the church ----

SUZIE

Less'n' he wur really broke.

CAST

Jupiter Jones
Jupiter Jones
None wur as mean as
Jupiter Jones
Why it's been said that he
Wur mean to the
Reckon he wur mean
Right clean to the
Bones
Jupiter Jones

COWBOYS

With a yippie ki o
An' a yippie ki a
The roughest toughest hombre
Of his day

PREACHER

An' the preacher said
The moment they were hangin' 'im
Jupiter why not repent
Before you die

COWBOYS

As he stood there
Facin' death
He breathed in
His final breath

SUZIE

An' spat tobaccee
In the Preacher's eye

CAST

Jupiter Jones
Jupiter Jones
There weren't none like
Jupiter Jones
Why there will never be
Another like
Never be another
Brother like
Jones
Jupiter Jones.

(Now a group of TOURISTS, perhaps the first carload off the backdrop, captured by SUZIE who leads them on briskly. A family of five typical easterners, gone a little west. FATHER wears a ten-gallon hat with his Brooks Brothers suit, MOTHER and TWO GIRLS just go for bandannas and riding boots. Only the kid, about eight, has a complete Hopalong outfit, including spurs and a six-shooter in a dragging belt)

SUZIE

(Who has captured a group of tourists offstage and is now leading them)
And this folks - is a bigger than life statue of JUPITER JONES - built by popular donations, for the grateful citizens of TRUMPET RIVER.

MOTHER
He looks darling --

(The STATUE winces)

SUZIE
And here - is our wild west Museum - complete with Jail House.

(She indicates it)

And over there - the humble cabin where 100 years ago, JUPITER JONES WAS BORN.

(COW-GIRLS are selling pennants, balloons and souvenirs. Atmosphere of hustling hucksters prevails)

KID
(Bronx origin. His shrill voice penetrates the general clamor)
Mommy - so who was JUPITER JONES?

(A sudden hushed silence, almost a painful silence. An old cowboy who has emerged from the saloon answers in a sepulchral voice as he twirls both six-shooters)

OLD COWBOY
When you ask that son - take off your hat.

(The frightened MOTHER tears off the KID's hat)

SUZIE
(Answering the kid)
Who was Jupiter Jones? Why son, he was the pride of the wild west - the shootinest, killingest favorite son of Trumpet River.

(As she goes on with her spiel, the kid replaces his hat)

And inside you will see life-like figures of his terrible gang. They will thrill you and chill you -

KID
(Same penetrating shrill voice, same curiosity)
Mummy - so what did he do?

OLD COWBOY
(Through same hushed silence)
When you ask that son - take off your hat.

(The KID needs no help this time)

SUZIE
(Answering him)
He held up trains and stage-coaches, he robbed banks and saloons, and broke out of jail - he killed sixty-three people not counting relatives - he was the wildest, wickedest, most cold-blooded desperado of the wild west.

OLD COWBOY
(With worshipful reverence)
Amen.

SUZIE
Jupiter Jones - our favorite hero. And we were lucky enough to have him born right there -
(She indicates Museum. Then, as her voice fills with awe)
And at the age of 25 - he was hung right there.
(She indicates tree)

KID
(Bewildered and replacing hat without help)
Mommy - this is a hero?

(The COWBOY moves to liquidate the KID but SUZIE cuts him off)

(MUSIC UNDER)

SUZIE
He sure was and I'll tell you why.

(SUZIE with CHORUS joining in explains why Jupiter Jones was a hero)

(SONG. WE CELEBRATE A HANGING)

We celebrate the hanging of a bandit
Who really ain't a bandit any more
In the light of what we show now
And our psychiatric know-how
We can name the reason for his fall
And the evil in the bones
Of our famous Jupiter Jones
Was really, really not his fault at all.

Oh you've got to blame his mother
'Cause she fed him at the breast,
Until the age of fifteen
He would run to mother's chest
But when she pushed his face back
And hollered that's enough
That's when Jupiter, poor Jupiter, got rough, got rough.

Oh you've got to blame the father
Who would never take the bother
To teach his son what everybody should know;
And you've got to blame his sister
Who refused to call him mister
And you've got to blame his auntie
Who one summer lost her panty
And gave the child a glimpse of what
He hadn't oughter see.

And you've got to blame his teacher
'Cause she wouldn't let him reach 'er
To be safe, you better blame the whole Community
So the evil in the bones
Of our famous Jupiter Jones
Was really, really not his fault at all.

SUZIE & CHORUS (Cont'd)

So the evil in the bones
Of our famous Jupiter Jones
Was really, really not his fault at all.

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(At the end of the song the tourists make a compulsive move towards the Museum, but SUZIE runs forward and blocks the entrance)

SUZIE

Small formality, folks, admission one buck.

FATHER

(Grumbling, as he removes wallet)
Even dead yet - that Jupiter Jones is still a bandit.

OLD COWBOY

(Reverently)
When you say that friend - take off your hat.

(Before they can move, HUTCH, the huckster, a New York sidewalk pitch man in western regalia, races in front of them)

HUTCH

(Very fast)
Come closer, folks, - you can't step across that sacred threshold without a Jupiter Jones souvenir. I have here a length of the very rope that hung him.
(He twirls it dangerously)
And special for this Jamboree - you can buy a three-inch cut for only two bucks. Makes a wonderful watch fob.
(He removes his own onion to prove it)

KID

Daddy - buy it - buy it --

FATHER

(Grumbling, digs into wallet)
Ain't that rope kinda long?

HUTCH

It's a stretching rope.

(STATUE reacts, looks sick. HUTCH roars at his own joke, collects a few sales and the TOURISTS flock into the Museum)

(SUZIE lingers behind.

ROY WILCOX enters. Big, husky, important stride, cruel, imperious face. He's in his late twenties. He is carrying a heavy saddle slung across his back, but holding it in one hand. He must have steel muscles and forged-iron fore-arms. His other hand is extended outwards)

ROY
(Roughly to SUZIE)
How we doing?

SUZIE
(Greedily)
And there's more where they come from. Let's milk them good.

(As he moves towards the newspaper office, the TRUMPET RIVER RATTLER, a roly-poly man waddles in. He is GABE, wears a large button on which is printed OFFICIAL. He is hot and disturbed. What disturbs him is a sheet of paper in his pudgy hand)

GABE
Hi Roy -

ROY
(Roughly takes the paper out of his hand)
How about it, Gabe - any more entries?

GABE
(Sadly, with a sense of guilt)
Not yet. Looks like they all scairt of you.

ROY
Why? Far as anybody knows - I compete fair -

GABE
But rough. Anyway you look at it, Roy - you ain't exactly the gentle type. And things get around. That hitch-hiker you pistol-whipped -

ROY
(Blazing)
He was a vagrant with no money. What's he doing in Texas-?

GABE
He was only a boy -

ROY

(Exploding)
And what's that got to do with the list?
(Shakes his finger at the paper)
Your job is to get me some competition. Find me some local names - if you want a show for these folks from the east. They're spending big money - maybe a million more this year than last -

GABE

(Glumly)
I know. But hardly anyone wants to buck you.

ROY

(Truculently)
Then do something - do something! That's what you're getting paid for.

(ROY moves towards a negro bootblack, still carrying the heavy saddle as if it were a bag of cotton)

(Imperiously)
Here boy - polish the silver on my saddle. When I ride out in the grand parade as Jupiter Jones - I want my gear to hit the folks right in the eye.

BOOTBLACK

Yes sir. Yes, Mr. Wilcox.
(He bends over and can hardly lift the saddle with both hands)
I'll shine it so's you'll blind them.

ROY

(The picture pleases him. He starts off towards the saloon)
That's what I want.

BOOTBLACK

(Still struggling with the saddle)
Yes sir.

(ROY struts off)

(Out comes VINEY, editor of the TRUMPET RIVER RATTLER)

GABE

Viney - we need a Bulletin. Right now!

VINEY

(A small man with a booming voice, talks in Big Print like his editorials)
What's up, Gabe? Hurricane, moonshine, tinhorns or roadblock?

GABE
No - no trouble like that. It's about the contests. We're mighty short on enterers. Got to stir up the young bucks --

VINEY
(Explosively)
What's happened to the fightin' blood of Trumpet River!

GABE
That's what I mean. Folks pourin' in from all over the country - they expect a show. We got to make this the biggest Jamboree ever - but if we don't get more local cowboys to compete -

VINEY
Don't they know about the prizes?

GABE
(Gloomily)
Cash money for all events - and free medical care -

VINEY
Don't they know the big point winner gets to play JUPITER JONES in the show -

GABE
(Shakes his head sadly)
Still no enterers.

VINEY
(Explosively)
What's happened to the fightin' blood of TRUMPET RIVER?
(In awed voice)
The chance to be JUPITER JONES! I remember when you couldn't keep the young bucks away. It was tradition - sacred tradition for every able-bodied man to compete. Boys would sneak in on stilts under their levis. Even women cut their hair off an' flang themselves against the bucking chutes. Did 'ja tell 'em JUPITER can rope the prettiest girl for his Queen? That should fetch 'em -

GABE
Should - but it don't. Except pros - I can't stir up the local boys against Roy Wilcox.

VINEY
He sure is powerful competition.

GABE
He can out-shoot, out-ride, out-rassle and out-sass every hombre in these parts -

VINEY
He sure can.

VINEY (Cont'd)
(Unrolls newspaper)
Says so himself right here in this full-page ad he took out for the special edition. Look at his picture.

(Ad shows him in the same posture as on his entrance)

A saddle on his back - and one hand out.

GABE
(After a quick glance)
Campaigns like he was runnin' for Congress -

VINEY
Many got there with less.
(Then)
I'll print a blast for the special edition.
(Shouts)
What's happened to the fighting blood of Trumpet River?

GABE
Print it strong --

VINEY
Don't have too much space, Gabe. I'm still fightin' the railroads for land-grabs, the cattle barons for water rights, the Commission for Indian Rights, and the Television companies for story-telling rights.

GABE
I know you're a true Western fighting editor -

VINEY
An' I just writ one long blast against our neighboring towns -

GABE
They actin' up -?

VINEY
Same as last year - same bitsy towns -
(Tolls them off on his fingers)
JACKPOT, SICK INJUN, BROWNHOLE, an' DUSSELDORF. Come Jamboree time an' they try to horn in on the glory of Trumpet River -

GABE
Our money too --

VINEY
With phony road signs an' detours.

GABE
They try to steal our customers.

VINEY
Well - I give 'em a blast in big print. Don't horn in on our glory - go raise your own bandits. Jupiter Jones belongs to us.

GABE
He sure as hell does -

VINEY
Yet BROWNHOLE had the beginnings of real civic pride in POLECAT SAM.

GABE
(With admiration)
He shore was wicked.

VINEY
But when they strung him up -- they just let him dry in the sun and forgot about him. They didn't appreciate a good thing when they had it.

GABE
But our founding fathers did.
(Indicating)
Mighty smart of them to preserve all this intact -

VINEY
(With real admiration)
Mighty, mighty smart. They bought this whole WIID WEST STREET cheap.
(Indicates it)
And let the new town grow thataway.
(Now he removes his hat. Reverence in his voice)
They realized what we must never forget. JUPITER JONES is not only our most revered son -
(Crisply)
But he's our man industry.
(He salutes the STATUE)

Possibility of song - GABE and VINEY joined by GIRLS. A tribute to the STATUE of JUPITER JONES. Then PEGGY comes on the scene. PEGGY RAMSEY is our heroine. And she looks it. She is extremely fetching in her riding outfit, her shapely legs and trim figure set off to great advantage. She is very pretty and works in the Publicity Department of the Chamber of Commerce. She carries a sheaf of statistics)

PEGGY
Hello, Uncle Gabe.

GABE
Now put all them figures away an' let me feast my eyes on you.

(Does so, beams)

Peggy, you look mighty pretty. You're sure to be the Queen.

PEGGY
Depends on who gets to be Jupiter.

GABE
A man would have to be blind not to pick you.

PEGGY
How about the entries: Let me see the list.

GABE
(Reluctantly shows her the list)
Not much. Just a few loco cowboys who snuck out of the Old Men's Home - the Snakebury twins, too dumb to be scairt - and a few drunks -

PEGGY
(Slowly)
Did Johnny enter?

GABE
No.
(Then hurriedly)
At least, not yet --
(He looks at PEGGY)
You'd like him to enter.

PEGGY
I would.

GABE
You don't figure him to win?

PEGGY
I figure him to try.

GABE
You know he's got no chance. Nobody has against Roy Wilcox. He can out-shoot, out-ride --

PEGGY
(Checks him)
I know. Roy showed me a copy of his full-page ad. But just the same --

GABE

(Slyly)
You still like Johnny - you still like that boy.

PEGGY

I do.

GABE

Enough?

PEGGY

Can't make up my mind. But I would like to know for sure he's quit being a boy.

GABE

Well I'll ask him to enter. I'll sure ask him.

PEGGY

I want him to enter like a man, a grown man.
(Half closes his eyes)
Who'll risk everything for the woman he loves, a man who'll conquer the world to lay at her feet.

GABE

(With admiration)
You could put that to music.
(Warmly)
He's got ta say yes.

PEGGY

(Wistfully)
I hope so.
(Then briskly as she starts to move)
Must get my publicity out. Do you realize Uncle Gabe that twenty-three thousand, four hundred and sixty-three cars passed through the Jupiter Jones arch in the last twenty-four hours?
(Enthusiastically)
What do you say to that?

GABE

(Sighs deeply)
I sure wish I owned a gas station.
(They both chuckle and go off)

ACT ONE

Scene 3

This takes place inside the Museum, which lights up. We see the wax effigies of JUPITER JONES' GANG - BILL BUTCHER-KNIFE, the CATFISH KID, DIRTY-FACE CHARLEY, COCKEYED FRANK, SNEAKY SILAS and RAMROD SAM.

They stand rigid while the tourists examine them, shivering deliciously at the close contact with such great desperadoes.

The KID pokes a gun in the ribs of DIRTY-FACE CHARLEY.

KID

(A shrill voice)
Stick 'em up, stick 'em up.

SUZIE

(Trying to restrain the boy)
Now don't get carried away, son. They're only wax figures.

(The KID, still determined, pokes his gun again)

THE KID

Stick 'em up, stick 'em up.

(From somewhere a mysterious hand gives him a clop on the head, and his western hat is pulled down over his eastern ears)

SUZIE

(Now makes her spiel to the assembled tourists. For this purpose she uses an exaggerated western drawl-twang)
Folks - there ain't too much we can say about these here Bad Men - except that they were pretty bad. They stole all they could but you might say they had to or starve 'cause there was no oil in Texas then. They jes' didn't believe in honest work - and died for their principles. They could ride an' shoot an' didn't care much whose horse they rode or who they shot. They lived hard, played hard and loved hard, and as

SUZIE (Cont'd)
far as our records show - not one of their women ever complained - twice.

(She moves on and crowd follows her)

On your way out you can buy life-size reproductions of these Desperadoes in Blood-Red or Noose Blue, with their last words printed out in golden letters. Here and there we had to change the language, jes' in case you want to send one to your Aunt Mathilda in Boston. Thank you very much - any questions?

(One male tourist stands close to DIRTY-FACE CHARLEY, and with great pride says)

ONE MALE TOURIST
I'm about the same built as Dirty-Fave Charley. Gimme one of him.

SUZIE
(Quickly)
There is a resemblance at that. If you'll wait around, I'll be glad to take your measurements.

(At this the tourist's wife seizes him)

TOURIST'S WIFE
Mordecai, don't let this western stuff go to your head all of a sudden.

(One woman, middle-aged, a librarian type, stands in front of RAMROD SAM. She seems fascinated by him and can't resist caressing his shoulder, his arms and his legs)

LIBRARIAN
(Eagerly to SUZIE)
Tell me more about what <u>he</u> did.

SUZIE
He had a weakness for throats - cutting them I mean -

LIBRARIAN
(Urging her to go on)
Yes - what else --

SUZIE
He would grab his victim by her long hair --

LIBRARIAN

And then --

SUZIE

Well - why give you more gruesome details. Just take my word for it. He had a way --

LIBRARIAN

(Trembling)
With women?

SUZIE

(Completing her sentence)
With a Bowie knife.

LIBRARIAN

(Looks at him with adoration)
What wicked eyes --
(She sucks in her breath)
How strong and cruel he must have been.
(Tremulously to SUZIE)
Please - one more question -

SUZIE

A pleasure --

LIBRARIAN

Why - oh why did they call him RAMROD SAM?

SUZIE

(Eyeing the figure)
Now that's a hard thing to figure out.

(SUZIE leads the tourists off)

ACT ONE

Scene 4

As soon as the wax figures are alone, they come to life and sing a song about the woes of being bad, bad men of the West.

WAX FIGURES

(Song: ~~BAD, BAD MEN OF THE WEST~~)

We were bad, bad men of the west
But the rubbernecks won't never let us rest
Tho the sheriff's hung and shot us
It's the tourist trade that's got us
We are bad, bad men of the west.

Quantrell was a two-gun man who wished to die in bed
But they shot him in the head, instead.
And poor Sam Bass who tries to amass
A fortune without work
They shot him in the pass, the narrow Pecos pass, alas
And Billy the Kid, for the things he did
They finally got rid of the Kid, and his hoss
Henry Plummer was a bummer, who had fun on the loose
Till they framed his neck in a posse's noose
(This was still before the days of juice)

All the Younger brothers were aged in wood
Had no chance to reach decrepitude
Then all three were consigned to Hollywood
And Joaquin Murrieta, lost his long vendetta
When they cut off his capetta.
His villainous head with the long hair that tickled
In wood alcohol they pickled
Charged a dollar to look
Then put his life in a book
Poor, poor Murrieta.

We were bad, bad men of the West
But it's time we got our well deserved rest.
Tho the sheriff's hung and shot us
It's the tourist trade that's got us
We were bad, bad men of the West.

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ACT ONE

Scene 5

NEAR THE BANK.

Stage is clear. JOHNNY comes out of the bank.

We now meet JOHNNY LINDEN, our hero, as he steps outside the First Rancher's Bank, where he works as one of the tellers. At this moment he looks a little less than heroic. Neat, yes. Sober, yes. A sweet guy, yes. But heroic, no. In his western outfit, for everyone must dress a la 1870 for the Jamboree - he is an attractive young man of gentle disposition and marked polite behavior.

He had ambitions but few aggressions. His passions are held in civilized check. If you asked him, he would admit to considerable relief that in 1955 you can repel a bank robbery by stepping on an alarm button in the floor, instead of shooting it out with a desperado.

As he stops by the Hitching Rack outside the saloon, near the bank, he meets PEGGY RAMSEY. JOHNNY's heart begins to flutter and pound as he lingers to make a little conversation.

Obviously, he is very much in love with her.

JOHNNY

Hi, Peggy.

PEGGY

Banking?

JOHNNY

Lunching.

PEGGY
Sorry, Johnny, I didn't get a chance to call you back.

JOHNNY
I know you're busy - what with the publicity for the Jamboree - I suppose I'm lucky I can even leave a message for you.

PEGGY
(Reprovingly)
Now, Johnny.

JOHNNY
Let me give you the figures. In the last six weeks -
(He holds up two fingers)
Two miserable dates. An accordion concert and a Community Sing.

PEGGY
Well - you're pretty busy yourself. You've got your Boy Scouts - the hikes - the mountain trails - your harmonica lessons - all that other stuff you go in for.
(Quickly)
The Chamber of Commerce keeps me pretty busy --

JOHNNY
You found time to see Roy Wilcox.

PEGGY
(Sharply)
Let me give you the figures.
(She holds up one finger)
Last two months - one date.

JOHNNY
To hear him tell it - it's an engagement.

PEGGY
(Pointedly)
Can I help it if Roy is strong-minded: He's a man of decision.

JOHNNY
(Firmly, with sudden decision)
I insist you have lunch with me.

PEGGY
(Smiling, but also firm)
Thank you, I can't. I'm too excited to eat. The Jamboree and all.
(Moves closer to him)
Aren't you excited?

JOHNNY

(Shrugs)
Not much. In my book, the anniversary of the hanging of a bandit - isn't exactly the same as Lincoln's Birthday.

PEGGY

(Sharply)
That's a narrow point of view.

JOHNNY

I know it isn't what the Chamber of Commerce thinks.

PEGGY

And it isn't what I think -

JOHNNY

(Tolerantly)
Okay - it's a free country. Let's debate it at lunch.

PEGGY

No thanks. I've got to run in and deposit my check.

JOHNNY

That won't take long. They even fight to handle your money.

PEGGY

You don't.

JOHNNY

Don't believe much in fighting. I'm a peace-loving man.

PEGGY

You were not a peace-loving boy. I remember in school when Biff Larkin tried to date me you gave him a bloody nose. And he was a head taller than you.

JOHNNY

I couldn't stand him putting his arm around you.

PEGGY

But you hit him - for me. That made me feel good.

JOHNNY

A primitive, savage reaction. I know better now.
(Defensively)
Must be other ways to win.

PEGGY

(Sarcastically)
Sure, dream about it.

JOHNNY

Got to dream - when you work behind bars.

PEGGY
Maybe you'll get mad and fight your way out - up -
(Comes closer)
Johnny - you come from fighting stock - your grandfather, a pioneer and Indian fighter - your great-uncle --

JOHNNY
(Smiling)
Figure me a throw-back to the one who was a minister -

PEGGY
(Trying to stir him into activity - orating)
You have to grow out of the cocoon of adolescence and meet the problems of our modern world head-on with fearless courage and spirit --

JOHNNY
(Smiling)
I had that same speech in English 8.

PEGGY
You forgot it - I didn't .....

JOHNNY
(Earnestly)
Peggy, what's all this fighting and competing got to do with us?

PEGGY
A great deal. You feel one way - I feel the opposite.

JOHNNY
Not when I hold you in my arms.
(Sighs)
It's been so long.
(He moves closer)
Peggy darling - even when people are in love they don't agree on everything.

PEGGY
(Firmly)
They have to agree on fundamentals.

JOHNNY
Such as?

(Possible song here on "What Are Fundamentals?" Then GABE walks into scene with his entry blanks and he smiles knowingly at PEGGY)

GABE
Johnny, you plumb forgot to sign up for the bull doggin' contest - or maybe shootin' or calf ropin' - or bronc ridin' -
(Rhapsodically)
This year we got us the best buckin' stock in the county.
(With greater enthusiasm)
We even got us a Brahma Bull - a bone breakin', bloodthirsty Brahma Bull.

(From behind the enclosure you can hear wild animal noises)

JOHNNY
No thanks. I got no stomach for strong meat.

GABE
(Appalled)
You cain't enterin' at all?

JOHNNY
(Shaking his head)
Nothing.

GABE
Nothin' at all?

JOHNNY
(Shakes his head)
Don't believe in all this wrestling, shooting wild competition - in fact, I could do without the whole Jamboree.

GABE
(Scared)
Don't let your boss hear you knocking the Jamboree. Means an awful lot of money to the bank.

JOHNNY
Don't care.

GABE
Y'ain't scairt of losin' your job - but you're scairt of Roy Wilcox.

PEGGY
He can out-ride, out-shoot, out-draw, out-wrestle -

JOHNNY
Out-brag any hombre in Trumpet River. Says so right here in the ad that he took out -

(Indicates it)

PEGGY
Then why don't you try to prove he's only a braggart. Don't call him names without backing it up.

GABE
(Eagerly)
If you win, you get not only cash money but you get to play Jupiter Jones in the big entertainment.
(With emphasis)
That's the big prize of the contests. Then you can lasso your own queen of the Jamboree.

JOHNNY
Know all about what I get. Got talked into competing last year. Came out twenty-second in the bow and arrow scoring.

PEGGY
That's because you didn't try hard ---

JOHNNY
(Ignoring her, continues)
Got to play one of the deputy sheriffs. Got shot down the minute I put my foot inside the saloon. Spent the whole Jamboree with my face in wet sawdust.

GABE
Then you won't do it -

JOHNNY
I'm a peace-loving man.

GABE
(To PEGGY)
He won't do it.

PEGGY
(Half in tears)
He's a peace-loving man.

JOHNNY
Is that a crime in this country?

PEGGY
No. But it's no credit either. A girl would like to know her man would defend her - if --

(She runs off to a corner to control her tears.

JOHNNY looks at her and sings a song expressing the wish that he could be both her ideal - and still remain himself)

1-5-25

(SONG: [redacted])

I wish I was brave
I wish I was bold
But I'm a man who was born
To do as he's told
When you do as you're told
You're a man who's controlled
By a man who is brave
By a man who is bold.

I wish I could change
To a different mould
Like the heroes I knew
In books of old
But I'm a man who was born
To read and to run
From a man who is brave
From a man who is bold.

But if I'm pushed too far
I might risk a scar
Might fight for a gal
Might fight for a right
Maybe lost my fright
Even die for a gal
With my eye on a star
If I'm pushed too far
But how far - is too far?
How far - is too far?
I wish I was brave
I wish I was bold
But I'm a man who was born
To do as he's told.

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(At end of song ROY comes in, still tall, powerful, chesty and blustery)

ROY

Hi, Peggy -

(He seizes her possessively. Tries to kiss her but she puts her hand up against his chest. Effect is not lost on JOHNNY)

PEGGY

You haven't won the contest yet. I hate to be taken for granted by anyone.
(She looks at both - then to ROY)
Wait till you're Jupiter Jones - wait 'til it's official -

ROY

(With what passes for tenderness in him)
After this Jamboree - I'll make more than that official -
(Looks at her significantly)
I'm adding stock and grazing land to the ranch. Building a new house. Figuring on settling down soon as this Jamboree's over.
(Comes closer to her)
Peggy, maybe you'll help me pick out the materials - the furnishings.

PEGGY

(Without too much enthusiasm)
Maybe -

ROY

(To GABE)
How the entries coming?

GABE

A few more but - still poorly.

ROY

Got to get some action -
(Laughs)
Don't exactly aim to win by forfeit.

GABE

Some boys comin' up from Brownhole -

ROY

(Contemptuously)
They're on the runty side -
(Points to JOHNNY)

ROY (Cont'd)

How about him?

(Directly and derisively)

How about you Johnny? You used to be pretty sharp before you became a big banker.

(Taunting)

Might do you good to get out in the open and fight something stronger than an adding machine.

(Cackling, he playfully lunges for him)

How about it?

JOHNNY

(Gracefully stepping out of his way)

Save it for the customers, Roy. You've been training all year for this Jamboree.

ROY

(Chuckling)

I still could lose.

JOHNNY

Not to me.

GABE AND PEGGY

He's a peace-loving man.

ROY

(Chuckling derisively)

Sure looks like it. He don't drink, he don't gamble, he won't ride or shoot. What does he do? Maybe he smokes on the sly. Let's ask him.

(Taunting)

Now - what do you do?

(Before JOHNNY can answer a few COWBOYS run in in a high state of anticipation - fun and excitement)

GABE

(Pounces after them)

How about signing up for the contest?

FIRST COWBOY

Not me - can't have no fun with broken bones -

GABE

(To Second)

You could win a cash prize -

SECOND COWBOY

Not me - I wrassle enough steers on the ranch.

GABE

(To Third)
You could pick the prize beauty for a Queen.

THIRD COWBOY
Not me - I'm here to do some lickerin'.

ALL
We're just here to buck the tiger.

(They sing a song about BUCK THE TIGER and disappear into the saloon)

ROY
Do the best you can, Gabe - I got some business in the bank.
(Takes PEGGY)
Coming Peggy?

(She looks back at JOHNNY - but he gives no sign of changing his mood - she moves away with ROY - they go into the bank)

(JOHNNY stands off to one side pensively. AUNT EUDORA (Johnny's aunt), a large, buxom bustling woman, comes on. Before she can exchange a greeting with JOHNNY, GABE intervenes and takes her over to one side)

GABE
(Conspiratorial whisper)
Eudora -

EUDORA
(Crisp, clear, high voice)
Stop whispering, Gabe - it gives me the creeps.
(GABE tries to shush her)
What is it?

GABE
(Pointing to JOHNNY)
You're his aunt -

EUDORA
(Impatiently)
Everybody knows that -

GABE
Maybe you can talk him into entering one of the contests. The way he's actin' - seems like the boy's got no courage.

EUDORA

(Pounces on him)

Courage! Humph! For twenty years you've been eating my Thanksgiving and Christmas dinners - you've praised my cooking - and sewing - and guzzled my whiskey. I've nursed you when you were sick, and tucked you in when you were falling down drunk. And yet - you haven't had the courage to propose.

(She shakes her finger at him)

Don't you talk to me about courage!

GABE

(Ignoring her thrust)

This is different. Everybody in Trumpet River will think Johnny is afraid.

EUDORA

Everybody in Trumpet River can mind their own business.

(She leaves GABE abruptly and goes over to JOHNNY)

Hi, Johnny.

JOHNNY

(Warmly)

Hi, Aunt Eudora.

EUDORA

Don't forget to stop for the picnic basket when you take your scouts up the mountain trail.

JOHNNY

Thanks. They sure love your biscuits.

EUDORA

And take care of yourself. Watch out for rattlers ---

JOHNNY

(Smiling)

I always do.

EUDORA

I mean the standing up kind.

(She bustles over to GABE)

(Seizing GABE)

You come off with me now. I got somethin' else to tell you about courage.

(JOHNNY walks over thoughtfully to the Hitching Rack. Two girls in western costume try to engage him in

flirtation, but he's too absorbed. They dance by.

He stands before the image of JUPITER JONES, puts his hand on the Hitching Rack. The feel of the wood seems to transmit its memories to him. The old days of the west, the fabulous riders who tied their horses, the stage coach all related to the Rack. This sturdy wood which knew violence and sudden departure, love, dreams and murder, at a time when contests were a way of life, not an entertainment.

The KID comes by alone and runs over to the STATUE of JUPITER JONES. He pokes his gun into the Jupiter Jones' ribs, crying:)

THE KID

Stick 'em up.

(The gun breaks and clatters to the ground. As the KID starts to wail, JOHNNY beckons him. JOHNNY, in a kindly gesture, puts his arm around the boy's shoulder and says:)

JOHNNY

Now, son let that be a lesson to you. Don't keep poking your gun into people. It's a shame the way you kids all over the world are brought up. You get holsters with your diapers. Stop poking guns. Stop hollerin' 'Stick 'em up.'

THE KID

But that's how it was in the days of the Wild West.

JOHNNY

(In a gentle voice)

Not all the time. If our kinfolk did nothing but kill and hold up people, this whole west would be a desert and a graveyard. In the old West there were peace-loving folks who sang and danced and worked and loved and had more use for decent living than for killing.

(In a nostalgic voice)

They raised sheep and cattle and feed for their stock. They got up at dawn and worked the live-long day and when the sun hung low in the west -

(At this, the Hitching Rack lights up. JOHNNY sings a song about THE OLD HITCHIN' RACK to the KID)

(JOHNNY sings "PLENTY A GOOD")

JOHNNY

Plenty a good folks
Hitched a horse
Right here --
Plenty a good folks
Beside them.
Plenty a good roads
Use to cross
Right here --
Plenty a good men
To ride them.
Plenty a good men
And plenty a good women
To --

Plenty a good cowboys
Punched a cow
Plenty a good farmers
Worked a plough
Plenty a good laws
And plenty a good men
Applied them
Plenty a good men
And plenty a good women
To --

Plenty a good songs
Rang through
This street --
Plenty a good fortune
Knew
This street --
Plenty a good men
Looked to
This street
With pride.
Plenty a good men
And plenty a good women
With plenty a good --
Inside --

JOHNNY

And they were the men and women who really made the West --

EDDIE

Golly --

JOHNNY

What's your name, son --

EDDIE

Eddie Phillips.

JOHNNY

Well, you just call me Johnny -- Where do you hail from, Eddie?

EDDIE

New York.

JOHNNY

Down here for the Jamboree, huh -- and a long way from home - I guess you can't be expected to understand much about the Old West -- Just knowing what you see in the movies and on television. Don't you go believing all those wild stories you hear -- Why, son, for ev'ry bad man there were a hundred good ones -- Would you like me to tell you about them --

EDDIE

Gee Johnny -- would you --

JOHNNY

(Singing)

Well they came from all parts
Of the country
Ev'ryone of them a pioneer
And they traveled for months
In covered wagons
And they settled down out here --

Some were stage coach drivers
Some were blacksmiths
Some were carpenters
Some were gold miners
Some were ranchers
Some were teachers
Others preachers
Some were doctors
Some lawyers
Some dentists
Some tailors
Some barbers
Some bakers
Some were saddle makers
And for ten dollars
There were always a few good
Undertakers --

JOHNNY (Cont'd)
Some were railroad men
Some were surveyors
Some were marshals
Some were sheriffs
Some were cavalry men
Some were Texas rangers
And some were just plain good
Strangers --
Why some were even show folks
Actors
Dancers
Singers
Minstrels
Comedians
Musicians of the local bands

And there were the folks
Who loved the feel of soil in there
Hands --
Some grew wheat
Some grew corn
Some grew barley
Some grew oats
Some grew alfalfa
Some grew potatoes
Others tomatoes --
Some raised sheep
Some cattle
Some horses
Some goats
Some pigs
And they all raised children
Darn good children
With darn good sense
Most became darn good citizens
Some --
Darn great men --

Sam Houston --
William S. Cody
Davy Crockett
Jim Bowie
General George Custer

JOHNNY (Cont'd)

Plenty a good folks
Hitched a horse
Right here --
Plenty a good folks
Beside them,
Plenty a good roads
Use to cross
Right here --
Plenty a good men
To ride them,
Plenty a good men
And plenty a good women
To --

Plenty a good cowboys
Punched a cow
Plenty a good farmers
Worked a plough
Plenty a good laws
And plenty a good men
Applied them
Plenty a good men
And plenty a good women
To --

Plenty a good songs
Rang through
This street --
Plenty a good fortune
Knew
This street --
Plenty a good men
Looked to
This street
With pride,
Plenty a good men
And plenty a good women
With plenty a good --
Inside --

(After the song, JOHNNY is snapped back to the present. Tourists emerge from the Museum)

(HUTCH races on and tries doing a little huckstering. He has a tray of cuff links and he approaches his pigeon, the Bronx tourist)

HUTCH

How about some souvenir cuff links?

FATHER

Made of silver?

HUTCH

(Reducing him to size)

What do you want silver for - when you can get genuine precious cottonwood from a genuine hanging tree?

FATHER

(Grumbling)

How much?

HUTCH

Only five dollars a pair.

FATHER

(Plaintively)

It's only wood.

HUTCH

But it's historical.

FATHER

(As he pays it)

What a bandit.

(SUZIE comes out, closes the door and puts out a sign, OUT TO LUNCH. Then seeing JOHNNY she runs to him)

SUZIE

Hi, Johnny -

JOHNNY

Hi, Suzie -

SUZIE

Who you taking to the Jamboree Square Dance?

JOHNNY

Figurin' to skip this one --

SUZIE
(In imitation of VINEY)
What's happening to the fighting blood of TRUMPET RIVER?

JOHNNY
It's drying up.

SUZIE
Why don't you take me? Last year I had four tourists as partners.

JOHNNY
Didn't they come back this year?

SUZIE
(Mournfully)
They did - with their wives.
(Moving closer to him)
Take me.

JOHNNY
Can't. Got to take my Boy Scouts on the monthly hike up in the canyon.

SUZIE
You sure are a stubborn peace-loving man.

JOHNNY
Well, I'm against these shenanigans.

SUZIE
(Slaps a hand over his mouth)
Sh- that's mutiny.
(Same editorial voice)
Where's your community pride? Don't you want to share in the glories of the past -
(She cuddles up to him)
To say nothing of the present?

JOHNNY
(Stubbornly)
Nope. Got talked into competing a few years back. Come out nineteenth in the horse-currying contest. Got to play the part of the decoy in the big chase. Got chosen to lure the bandit. Had to lure him by sticking my head out from behind some rocks. Got hit on the head by a falling stone. Spent the Jamboree unconscious on a boulder. Damn near froze to death.

SUZIE
(Shrewdly)
That isn't your real reason.

SUZIE (Cont'd)
(She comes closer to him)
You know Peggy would like you to be a hero. But you're stubborn enough not to be one.

JOHNNY
Maybe so. When I get back from the Boy Scout hike, I'll sit this Jamboree out in my little room at the Pokey-Nine.

SUZIE
You just want to stay a bank clerk.

JOHNNY
Maybe so. For sure I don't want to be a bandit or in the posse or a hero or anything but me, Johnny.

SUZIE
Here's the deposits.
(Hands him a pouch stuffed with money)
To the account of Clint Duggan. It's Museum money, souvenir money, refreshment money and lost and found money. Comes to so much I can't add it up.

JOHNNY
(Suddenly bristling)
But that does get me fighting mad. That money should go to TRUMPET RIVER. It's the town that fetches the tourists but a couple of smart people figured out a way to keep all the money.

SUZIE
Not all. I get paid, Peggy gets paid, you get paid.

JOHNNY
I mean the big money.

(He goes off bristling.

Then FLIP, handsome, young, energetic, comes on. He wears a big camera, as SUZIE sees him her face lights up with immediate interest)

SUZIE
(She removes the out-to-lunch sign)
Hi tourist - museum's closed - but I'll be glad to make an exception for you.

FLIP
Who's a tourist? Can't you tell what I am?

SUZIE
Let me guess.

SUZIE (Cont'd)
(Brightly)
A Photographer -

FLIP
For OPEN - the magazine that hides nothing -

SUZIE
OPEN -

FLIP
We cover the world -

SUZIE
(Coquettishly)
How about starting with me -

FLIP
(Ignoring her)
I drew the plum assignment of the year -

SUZIE
Can you tell so soon?

FLIP
(Acts it out dramatically)
OPEN GOES TO A HANGING.
(To her)
There will be a hanging.

SUZIE
A mock hanging. It's the climax of the Jamboree.

FLIP
(Confidentially)
I hope to win an award for the most gruesome pictures of the year.
(Shivers deliciously)
A hanging.

SUZIE
But there's more to the Jamboree than just a hanging. Before Jupiter Jones is strung up we'll have a rodeo, a saloon-brawl - well,
(She moves closer to him - flirtatiously)
If you play your cards right - I'll help you get lots of pictures. A sensational layout -

FLIP
(Delighted)
Great, great - but who are you?

SUZIE
I'm the curator.

FLIP

What?

SUZIE

(Indicating)
I'm in charge of this museum.

FLIP

(Hardly believing)
You are?
(Appraising her)
A beautiful - well built -
(Then quickly)
well-informed girl like you! Usually it's some old geezer who can hardly walk.

SUZIE

(Lapping up his praise)
How do you think I got this job? I was appointed by an old geezer who can hardly walk.

(SUZIE sings a song about the kind of jobs you get only on merit. Yanks him inside)

ACT ONE

Scene 6

The bank moves over and lights up. Focus on DALTON the president's desk near which sit ROY and CLINT, all three in a huddle.

DALTON
Well, the figures are encouraging. More tourists spending more money in Trumpet River this year than ever before. The Old West gets bigger and more glamorous every day. It's got the whole world hypnotized.

CLINT
That's why I say the time is ripe to expand.

DALTON
What's the plan?

ROY
We aim to cover the whole country with JUPITER JONES souvenirs.

DALTON
(Impressed)
Go ahead - play out your hand -

ROY
After I win all the contests - and get to play JUPITER JONES - we go for big world publicity. Pictures of me - I'll say I'm the last livin' kin of the real desperado.

CLINT
But this time - we don't forget him till the next Jamboree --

ROY
This time we hit the big world market. There's hardly a country on the map that wouldn't appreciate a real western bandit.

(CLINT indicates a display of Hopalong Cassidy stuff)

CLINT
You see this. Four bits worth of tin and imitation leather - parlayed into millions. You see this -
(He puts a coonskin hat on ROY)

CLINT (Cont'd)
A stinkin' flea-trap that turns angel faces into porcupines parlayed into millions. Now look at this -

(From out of a closet steps a little boy modelling the JUPITER JONES desperado outfit. It is an exaggerated bandit's regalia. KID MODEL immediately whips two guns out of his holster and in an ear-splitting voice -)

KID MODEL
Stick 'em up - Stick 'em up.

CLINT
(Claps a hand not too gently over his mouth and says in a mellow voice)
I can see it now - the gratitude of five million parents when their children run through the house in this outfit yelling 'Stick 'em up'.
(He points to several of the features of the outfit and adds with pride)
I designed this myself.

DALTON
(With admiration)
You sure know how a bad man ought to look.

CLINT
And with it comes a real Desperado Kit - JUPITER JONES belt and guns - JUPITER JONES riding boots -

ROY
JUPITER JONES hats and bandannas.

CLINT
JUPITER JONES saddles. We can make them right here in Trumpet River and ship to the world.

ROY
We'll sell more than Hopalong Cassidy and Davey Crockett put together -

CLINT
After all - they're only cowboys and Injun fighters.

ROY
And in this man's country - a bandit outranks both.

CLINT
And for a bonus we throw in this certificate -

CLINT (Cont'd)
(And he unrolls a diploma of monstrous size and reads it)
'This is to certify that Joe Blow is a full fledged member of the Western Badman's Organization. He has lived and associated with card sharks, desperadoes, rustlers, bank robbers, jail breakers, and gun slingers.'
(He pauses)

DALTON
(With admiration)
That's great, Clint.

CLINT
(Continuing)
We give 'em this diploma for nothing, but later on we sell 'em a beautiful frame made of genuine yucca wood - a true western hanging tree.

DALTON
Enough. I throw my hand in. You win. I see it. Millions.

CLINT
And we three share it -

ROY
I'm the front -

CLINT
I'm the rear -

DALTON
I'm the money.
(Suddenly)
You sure you'll win the contest?

ROY
Bound to. I can out-ride, out-shoot, out-rope -

DALTON
I know - I read your ad - but - how about the Pros?

ROY
(Glibly)
They ride for money. I'll buy 'em off.
(Chuckling)
It's a cinch.

CLINT
They can't even raise no good local competition against him.

ROY

And that's the truth -

DALTON

It's a deal - we figure you're the official JUPITER JONES - and we start the ball rolling.

(They shake hands jubilantly, and possibly all sing about how they are going to flood the country with JUPITER JONES' garments and gadgets.

Back to STAGE CENTER. ROY has emerged alone and detains PEGGY who is coming through)

ROY

Peggy - I'd like to clear up something.

PEGGY

(Impassively)
What is it Roy?

ROY

When I told you I was adding stock and grazing land - and a house - well - you didn't spark too much -

PEGGY

Why should I? It's your land - your stock - your house --

ROY

I want it to be ours. All of it.
(Moves closer)
Peggy - I'm better at taking, than asking - better at giving orders than waiting for an okay - but right now -
(What passes for him as choked emotion)
well - I'm asking you to marry me.

PEGGY

(Quickly)
I can't promise that - yet -

ROY

(Pressuring)
What's to stop you?

PEGGY

(Fencing, evasively)
Oh, the natural brakes a girl puts on when she's asked to suddenly change her name, give up her home and her ways of

PEGGY (Cont'd)
living - entrust herself to a stranger, close one door marked Personal, and open another where ---
(She looks at him)
Do I have to go on?

ROY
(Angrily)
I'll say you do. Because you still haven't come to the real reason.

PEGGY
(Blandly)
Oh - you know it?

ROY
(Blazing)
And you know it, too. It's that Johnny.

PEGGY
Well - I do like him.

ROY
But what have you got in common with him? Nothing. You stand for progress and courage and manhood and the whole forward looking spirit of TRUMPET RIVER. While he -
(He searches for words)
Well, he hasn't even got the guts to enter one of the contests.

PEGGY
He may have his private reasons -

ROY
Yes - he sure has - and the color of his reasons shows right through his shirt.

PEGGY
(Flaring up)
Stop it, Roy. You can't ride rough-shoed over everybody.

ROY
You know another reason?

PEGGY
Johnny's no coward. If I asked him to do it for me -

ROY
(Eagerly)
It's a deal. I'll go fetch him. And then - you ask him.

(ROY exits rapidly)

(Then SUZIE comes on. She goes straight to PEGGY)

SUZIE
What's wrong, Peggy? You look upset.

PEGGY
It's Johnny. He won't enter any of the contests.

SUZIE
Have you asked him?

PEGGY
Not straight out. But I will as soon as Roy finds him.

SUZIE
How will you ask him?

PEGGY
In plain language.
(She shakes her finger angrily)
I'll say to him - Johnny ---

SUZIE
(Her eyes twinkling)
Whoa, Peggy!
(She comes closer to her)
Look, honey, you've got better ammunition than plain language. If you want a man to do something for you - you've got to soften him up first.
(Suddenly bristles)
Of course with some of my men, I had to do it with a sledge-hammer.
(Then smiling)
But you - if I had your ammunition I could win a war with a sling-shot.

PEGGY
What do you mean?

SUZIE
How long is it since you've kissed Johnny?

PEGGY
Oh - two weeks. And it wasn't much of a kiss. Just a quick good-night peck.

SUZIE
That's not enough to send a man out into battle. You've got to kiss him so that he won't be able to sleep all night for dreams of clawing and tearing off your clothes and chasing you up a tree. There's got to be enough voltage in that kiss so that he'll toss and shiver all night like a sick pup and wake up whimpering and begging for more.

PEGGY

(Wide-eyed)
Like that?

SUZIE

You've got to kiss him so that he'll look like a ghost and act like a goof and stagger around all day like a miner in the desert parched for rain and begging for a drop of water.

PEGGY

Who ever kissed like that?

SUZIE

Cleopatra - Delilah - and Sheba.

PEGGY

They did?

SUZIE

They sure did. Those dames changed the map every time they puckered up - and made history every time they made a man.

(SUZIE sings a song about the great kissers of history)

When Cleopatra kissed her man
Upon her royal plush divan
He lay there,
Just lay there,
And later on when he came to
The only thing that he could do
Was pray there
For more.

Although his name was Anthony
A king of great renown
'Twas pretty plain for all to see
That Cleo wore his crown.

(At the end of the song, JOHNNY comes on. SUZIE leaves PEGGY with a sly wink)

PEGGY

(Firmly, decisively)
Come here, Johnny.

JOHNNY

(He moves over)
Yes, Peggy -

PEGGY

Do you remember the last time I kissed you?

JOHNNY
(A little flustered)
Well - vaguely. It was only an innocent goodnight kiss - and so long ago --

PEGGY
(Embraces him quite firmly)
Well - this will refresh your memory.
(She kisses him full on the lips. He is surprised, but recovers quickly. Then he kisses her. PEGGY responds and together they melt into a long, passionate kiss. JOHNNY emerges from it reeling)

How do you feel?

JOHNNY
(In a goofy voice)
Wonderful. But my knees feel like rubber - and my throat is dry - and
(He reaches for her)
I need more -

PEGGY
(Eluding him)
Later Johnny. First show me you deserve more.

JOHNNY
Sure, Peggy. Anything - anything. Just ask me.

(ROY comes on briskly, walks over to JOHNNY)

ROY
(Annoyed)
What are you doing out of your cage in the bank? I looked for you.
(To PEGGY)
Well - here he is. Now go ahead and ask him.

PEGGY
(With confidence)
I will.

ROY
Hey - Johnny - Peggy wants to ask you something.

JOHNNY
(Calmly)
Peggy doesn't need you to get my ear.
(Turns)
What is it, Peggy?

PEGGY

(Slowly)
Johnny - it's a kind of a bet - maybe a silly bet.
(Looks at him pleadingly)
Would you - for my sake - enter one of the contests?

JOHNNY

(In a gentle voice)
Peggy - we've been through that already. You know how I feel about you - but you also know how I feel about this kind of violence...

PEGGY

(Controlling her emotion, her tears)
But if I told you this means a great deal to me - to us -- that it's important for you to enter --

JOHNNY

(Quietly, firmly)
The answer is still -- No.

ROY

(Triumphantly)
Will you believe me?

PEGGY

(With an effort at control)
All right, Roy. After the Jamboree -- after you're JUPITER JONES - you ask me again.

(PEGGY rushes off controlling her tears)

ACT ONE

Scene 7

Scene shifts to STAGE CENTER, a little later. Six spindly-legged kids in Boy Scouts uniforms have gathered, some with their mothers or big sisters. PEGGY has brought Davey. JOHNNY again emerges from the bank, his duties over for the day. The kids cluster about him, gleefully chanting, "We're ready for the hike, Johnny."

JOHNNY
You're early. I like that - a Boy Scout's always on time.

DAVEY
Couldn't wait to get started, Johnny. We had so much fun last time. And that rattler -

JOHNNY
(Stopping him)
Quiet.

DAVEY
(In a whisper)
Oh, I didn't tell anyone that you shot it.

(DAVEY looks up at him with real affection which JOHNNY returns. It's obvious these two have a special bond)

MICKEY
(Another kid)
Look, Johnny, I brought my pup tent. Sleeps two.

(JOHNNY pats him on the head)

JOHNNY
Good.

WILLIE
(A third kid)
I'm toting an extra blanket and cooking stove.

JOHNNY
Great. We'll be on the march soon.

(All the kids shout their enthusiasm)

GABE
(Sees DAVEY clinging to him. To PEGGY admiringly)
That Johnny - he sure gets along with boys.

PEGGY
(Glumly)
With boys. Period.

DAVEY
I like you, Johnny.

(JOHNNY smiles; to PEGGY)
He's the only one who takes us on hikes.

JOHNNY
I get a big kick out of it.

DAVEY
(Almost bitterly)
Everybody else is darn busy with the Jamboree.

PEGGY
(Pointedly)
People have jobs to do. And the Jamboree's important --

(The other members of the troop have gathered around)

JOHNNY
(Sternly)
Members of the Trumpet River Splinter Troop - 'tention!

(They snap to attention. JOHNNY steals a look at PEGGY to see the effect of his manly command on her)

PEGGY
(Not without sarcasm)
Johnny - please keep an eye on Davey. Last month he came back with Poison Oak.

JOHNNY
Must've picked it up in your own back yard. A Boy Scout knows how to distinguish between plants.

MRS. ALDRICH
(Willie's mother - steps forward)
And Johnny - please be sure that Willie -
(She whispers the rest in his ear)

JOHNNY
A Boy Scout knows when to fall out.

(As another mother comes closer JOHNNY, with some irritation)

Let the boys learn for themselves - and act for themselves. You'd like to baby 'em and still want 'em to be men. I can never figure out you women.

(JOHNNY sings a song about how he can't figure out women)

1-7-48

(SONG: I CANNOT TELL A THING)

Now I can tell which way the wind is blowing
North or south
East or west,
I can tell any critter by the track she's showing
Lion or mouse
Friend or pest
I can tell a bird by the note he'll sing
I can hit an eagle with a pebble and a sling
But when it comes to wimmin I can't tell a thing,
Can't tell a thing, can't tell a thing.

I can rig a tent on the side of a hill
Wind is down
Or in a gale
I can tell any fish by the smell of his gill
Bass with stripes
Herring or whale
I can call your crop in the middle of spring
Build you a shelter with spit and a string
But when it comes to wimmin' - I can't tell a thing,
Can't tell a thing, can't tell a thing.

I can hike my boys, to a mountain top
They cry for a drink
Their little feet hurt
I command them to go and they never, never stop
March and march
Not one'll dessert
I can go to town and not have a fling
I can spend like a beggar and feel like a king
But when it comes to wimmin' - I can't tell a thing
Can't tell a thing, can't tell a thing.

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(ROY and CLINT have come out of Bank and GABE has appeared from the other side. All listen to last few lines of song)

GABE

C'mon Johnny - change your mind - sign up --

JOHNNY

I meant what I said. All the shooting and wrangling is ridiculous. It isn't the real West.

ROY

(In mocking laughter)

I suppose you could show us the real West.

JOHNNY

Maybe so - I could.

(The grown-ups laugh but JOHNNY ignores them. With considerable dignity to his boys)

Members of the Trumpet River Splinter Troop - at ease. Soon as I change into my uniform we'll be on the march.

(Ignoring jibes and laughter, JOHNNY goes off to his room at the POKEY-NINE)

ACT ONE

Scene 8

As action near the Museum lights up.

SUZIE and FLIP emerge from the Museum. His face is festooned with lipstick; her hair is mussed and there are stars in her eyes.

SUZIE
(Breathlessly)
Well, Flip - did you get all you wanted?

FLIP
(Ecstatically)
I sure did. And what shots. I must say Suzie - you're a wonderful guide.

SUZIE
And I must say - you're the ideal tourist. You let me lead you by the hand - you're happy with everything I show you - you ooh and aah - you've got strength, warmth, enthusiasm ...
(She punctuates each virtue)
...and above all -
(She kisses him passionately)
You appreciate true, western culture!

FLIP
(Gulping for air)
Thanks.
(He returns her kiss with equal passion)

SUZIE
(Also gulping)
And - you're a generous tipper.

FLIP
(Suddenly mindful of his job)
Got to get more pictures. I mean -
(Indicates)
Outdoor stuff.

SUZIE
You don't need me for that. But when you go to the dark room - for developing the negatives - you call me.

FLIP

Positively!

(Some of the GIRLS come out and begin to tug at FLIP)

1st GIRL

Take my picture, please.

2nd GIRL

Take my picture. I want to be on the cover of a magazine.

(SUZIE pushes them away)

SUZIE

If he is taking anybody's picture, it's mine.

(FLIP (with a pleased expression) goes into song with SUZIE.

From the parapet comes the announcement that the contests have begun off-stage)

ACT ONE

Scene 9

POKEY-NINE HOTEL - JOHNNY'S ROOM

We next pick up JOHNNY in his little room at the Pokey-Nine Hotel. His mood is one of anguish and self-accusation.

From below, rise the sounds of laughter, shouting music and merriment, the cheers for the contestants in the preliminaries to select a JUPITER JONES. Since he so carefully avoided the challenge, he also wants to avoid the mocking sounds. He shuts the window tight. Then, as an extra precaution, he also pulls down the shade. After all, he's going to take his clothes off. He undresses down to his shorts, steals a glance at himself in the mirror. Not too bad.

He clenches his teeth, masks his face with a savage expression, taking a fighting stance like a Western bandit, snarls "Put 'em up Roy," when suddenly the room is plunged into darkness. He leaps into bed, pulling the covers over him.

Over the darkness, a weird, greenish illumination fills the room. Also a suspenseful hush as if all the noises from below were stilled. Slowly, he tucks his head out. The window shade begins to rattle violently, as if blown by a fierce wind. He is frightened because he knows he closed the window. The room seems to quake, begins to fill with an eerie far-off music, music he never heard before, as if from an outer world. In it, he begins to distinguish the sound of horse's hoofs, coming always closer. He is so frightened his jaws move, but no cry leaves his lips. Now the

light grows stronger and brighter and the terrifying outlines of a man about his own size and age grow clearer and clearer. Around this man's head there is a weird, greenish halo. JOHNNY looks, forces himself to stare - and he is frozen stiff by what he sees.

In the room, large as life and twice as emphatic, heavily armed and dressed in his familiar colorful outfit, stands JUPITER JONES. There isn't a mark on him, of death, or battle - only a bruise around his neck, above his bandanna.

JOHNNY
Who --oo-who --oo are you?

JUPITER
Don' git me riled up with fool questions. You know dangwell who I am.

JOHNNY
Why - you're JUPITER JONES.

JUPITER
The real JUPITER JONES. Been hangin' around since dawn jes' waitin'.
(Suddenly)
Did you ever have breakfast inside a statue?

JOHNNY
But how did you get here?

JUPITER
Special convoy man - Two witch outriders an' a flyin' pinto.

JOHNNY
Did you come up ---or down---?

JUPITER
What's the difference? Once you've lived in Texas every other place is hell.

JOHNNY
Wha- what do you want?
(Blankets are still shivering)

JUPITER
Justice man - that's what I want. They let me come here to protect my good name. To stop 'em from shootin' holes in my reputation -

JOHNNY
Your reputation!

JUPITER
That's what I said man. I was a desperado - not a general store. I drew smooth an' fast an' outgunned the best.

JOHNNY
Every school kid knows that -

JUPITER
I shot up banks an' saloons - an' held up stage coaches -

JOHNNY
It's all written up.

JUPITER
I cut sixty-eight notcies in my gun - not countin' relatives.

JOHNNY
Sixty-eight --

JUPITER
But what are they doin' to my name now? Sellin' JUPITER JONES baby rattlers an' JUPITER JONES all-day candy peppermint suckers -

(Enraged)
Usin' my valuable name for legitimate business.

JOHNNY
You against that?

JUPITER
I sure as hell am. And besides the wrong people is gettin' rich off my good name. Shucks man - if I ever figured that a li'l ole bitsy piece of my noose would sell for two dollars an inch - I'd a had myself hung from a high-roof chimney, 'stead of a hangin' tree. I'd a left a pot o' gold to the orphans an' widders of Trumpet River.

JOHNNY
You - you would --

JUPITER
I'm here to git justice not only for me but for Trumpet River for I love this li'l town. I was born an' died here.
(A tear rolls down his cheek)
I robbed my first bank in Trumpet River.

JOHNNY
I know - I work in it.

JUPITER
(Another tear)
The first stage coach I held up was a spur line from the Trumpet River -- my first saloon brawl right under this room - my first walk-down on this very street - my first jail break.

(He indicates, then quits crying and suddenly indignant)
If my name's gonna make any money - I want Trumpet River to git it --

JOHNNY
An' that ain't all.
(Voice softens and a mischievous twinkle in his eye)
While I'm here - I'm gonna git all that's comin' to me.
(His voice grows tender)
You know - I never did have enough of wimmin'. Some of them writin' fellers make out like I did - but I know for sure - I didn't.
(Plaintively)
Never could go to bed except with all my clothes on. Carried two six-shooters in my holsters, a knife near each hand and a special gun under my pillow - and a rifle at my feet.
(Regretfully)
You know - all that gear in bed - kinda hampers a man.

JOHNNY
Yeah - but - but -

JUPITER
An' that ain't all. This here hognose snake Roy Wilcox who calls hisself a kin o'mine -
(Angrily)
how could a deputy sheriff be a kin o'mine at any time?
(Furiously)
He's a crook - he's stealin' all that JUPITER money - an' he's aimin' to steal more. I'm gonna cut him in two.

JOHNNY
Yippee.
(Then soberly)
H-how're you going to do all those things?

JUPITER
(After a tense pause)
Through you!

JOHNNY

(Alarmed)
Me? Why - why me?

JUPITER

'Cause you favor me. First off - you're my age. I never did have a chance to get very old. An' you're runty an' spindly same as me - I don't care for them big chesty fellers - flappin' an' crowin' an' pushin' li'l folks around. But a li'l runty feller like you - they don't expect no backfire from him.

JOHNNY

(Sadly)
I know that -

JUPITER

But that gives the li'l feller an ace in the hole -

JOHNNY

It - it does?

JUPITER

Ain't I proved that again an' agin' -

JOHNNY

(Electrified)
When do you start?

JUPITER

(Significantly)
That - depends on you -

JOHNNY

On me?

JUPITER

I can't come back through you - lessen you let me.

JOHNNY

(Moans)
Oh, no.

JUPITER

(Persuasively)
Man, think of all the fun we'll have. Ridin' Roy into the ground - makin' things right for Trumpet River - drillin' anybody that gits in our way - why man - we might kill us a dozen ornery critters before the shindig's over. We'll have something to talk about for the rest of eternity -

JOHNNY

(Still moaning)
Oh no ---

JUPITER
An' you'll win the girl - the girl you're in love with. Peggy.

JOHNNY
(Bolts up in bed)
I'll get Peggy?

JUPITER
(Eyes gleaming wickedly)
I know you're crazy for her. I've been hoverin' near you - watchin' an' listenin' to you -

JOHNNY
(Longingly)
I've been crazy about Peggy ever since we were kids -
(Sadly)
But she can't see me for Roy Wilcox.

JUPITER
(Vehemently)
You mean she can't see you till you enter the contests. She'll see you when you're up on a horse. She'll see you big and proud when you're JUPITER JONES. She'll come flying after you.

JOHNNY
(Sorely tempted)
You sure?

JUPITER
Man - I guarantee it. You'll be king-pin of the Jamboree. Not a play-actin' rooster - but JUPITER JONES himself. Didn't she tell you she wants a man of action? Be one an' Peggy will fall into your arms like a ripe plum.

JOHNNY
(Still disturbed)
But I promised my Boy Scouts to take them up the trail -
(Ruefully)
I hate to disappoint them.

JUPITER
(Explosively)
You hate to disappoint them!

JOHNNY
(Explaining)
I never broke my word before.

JUPITER
(With shattering irony(
You never broke your word before!
(Regards him, almost disgusted)

JUPITER (Cont'd)
Man - you ain't got too much equipment to be Jupiter Jones, even with me inside of you.
(Then brushing aside any other objections)
Now just forget about those boys - and put in with me.

JOHNNY
If I say yes - will I be me - or will I be you?

JUPITER
Me in the sassin' - you in the show down. Me in the fightin' you in the winnin' -

JOHNNY
Now suppose - I'm just supposin' - I want to be me - only me - for a little while.

JUPITER
(Shakes his head)
I can't be ridin' forward and rearin' backwards. But if it's a matter of life and death I'll let you. I'll hide deep down inside you - and let you be you. Just one time.

JOHNNY
You drive a hard bargain.

JUPITER
Look what you get.
(Dramatically)
You and nobody else - you get the big prize - Peggy!

JOHNNY
Is that a promise?

JUPITER
It shore is.

JOHNNY
(Fervently)
On your soul, you promise?

JUPITER
(Quickly)
Don't drag my soul in. Jupiter Jones never broke his word.

JOHNNY
Okay, it's a deal - it's a deal.

JUPITER
(Exurbantly)
Yippeee. It's a deal.

JOHNNY
Now - just exactly - how do you go about this?

JUPITER
I'll join up with you.

JOHNNY
How?

JUPITER
Get ready man - I'm joinin' up.

(JUPITER makes a flying leap into JOHNNY's bed)

(NOTE: FROM HERE IN JOHNNY WILL BE CALLED JUPITER JONES EXCEPT WHEN HE IS TALKING TO JUPITER - AND ONCE IN HIS FINAL SCENE WITH PEGGY)

ACT ONE

Scene 10

We now return to the Square. In the background unseen is the contest area where the first of the events have taken place. ROY, already victorious in the opening events, is ready to take on all comers. He is chortling and swaggering in triumph. He has a possessive eye on PEGGY who is now dressed in Jamboree costume, and his arm is around the title. It seems certain that he will be named JUPITER JONES OF 1959. He cannot resist a final braggadacio gesture.

ROY takes a stage center as three losing contestants are carried off on stretchers.

ROY
Well, folks, you had a small sample of the old west. But wait till we take you back seventy-five years. I'll do my best to be as good --
(Laughs)
I mean as bad as JUPITER JONES was himself.

(ROY winks to DALTON and CLINT - a wink that indicates that it's in the bag but he cannot resist taking another braggadacio challenge)

Is there anyone else who would like to give me a little opposition?

(Suddenly, there is a splinter of glass from a window on the first floor of the Pokey-Nine. The eyes of all spectators turn towards it. They are astonished by what they see. The former JOHNNY prances out on the window sill, clad in all the garments of JUPITER which fit him very well indeed. He fires a volley from his six shooter, lets out a blood-curdling yell and jumps right out of the window into a menacing stance before the astounded ROY)

JUPITER
You say you're the best hombre in Trumpet River? The best in braggin' - maybe - an' the best in stealin' - but for manpower I say - you ain't the best.

(He hurls the challenge right into his teeth)

(Before the astonished ROY can answer, JUPITER moves over to PEGGY.

With thesame braggadacio air)
Hi, Peggy.
(He pinches her cheek rather familiarly, then struts a little)
Surprised?

PEGGY
I certainly am. I practically got down on my knees and begged you to enter. I kissed you so hard my lips are still bruised.

JUPITER
It was wonderful, Peggy, but ---

PEGGY
You turned me down. Now for some weird reason you're all duded up and rarin' to go. What got into you?

JUPITER
I can't tell you.

PEGGY
You don't have to. It must be potent stuff.

JUPITER
I'll say. Green lightning.
(He gives her another hug)

PEGGY
(Aghast)
Johnny - you're a changed man.

JUPITER
You bet I am.

(Gives her a little pat on the rump)

(PEGGY leaps back. GABE runs up with his entry sheet)

GABE
(Jubilantly)
You signin' up, Johnny, for one of the contests?

JUPITER
(Grandly)
For all of them. I'm aimin' to burn Roy Wilcox like a weed.

ROY
(Livid with rage)
You hay-crazy?

JUPITER
(Hurling the challenge at him)
Why don't you find out? Or did you use it all up just braggin'?

PEGGY
(Suddenly concerned)
Johnny, are you sure you know what you're doing?

(JOHNNY seizes her and puts his arms around her just as boldly as ROY had done earlier. She breaks out of his grip more out of surprise than with the reaction she had given ROY)

JUPITER
(Exaggerated)
I sure do. As soon as I finish off this weasel, I'll prove it to you, darlin'.
(In a mock tender voice)
I'm adding a lampshade and a new fangled TV set to my room at the Pokey-Nine. I want you to help me pick 'em out.

GABE
(Full of flourishes with a sheet of paper, moves over to PEGGY)
I'll say one thing for Johnny. He don't do things half way. When he's on the side of peace you can't get a rise out of him. But when he gets to fight - he goes whole hog.

(PEGGY, alarmed in spite of her distaste for the new JOHNNY)

PEGGY
He doesn't know what he's doing. Roy will kill him.

GABE
(Almost slyly to PEGGY)
That's what you wanted to find out. If he could - I mean -

JUPITER
(Shouting)
How about it Roy? You want to keep these people waiting all day?

(ROY, suddenly enraged and recovering his composure)

ROY
Come on, you runt.

(As the crowd starts to move:)

GABE
Get a stretcher ready.

(As they back towards the enclosure)

FLIP
This is where I get some great unexpected pictures.

SUZIE
I'm closing up the museum. Here is one contest I won't miss.

(As the crowd starts to move, the kids cluster around JOHNNY, holding him back for a few minutes)

DAVEY
(In a hurt voice)
Johnny - you promised to take us on a hike.

JUPITER
(Gruffly)
Got no time for those shenanigans.
(Frees himself from DAVEY's grip)
There's man's work to be done.

DAVEY
(Surprised and hurt)
But Johnny - you never broke your word before.

JUPITER
I'm breaking it now -
(Pushes him rather roughly)
Get out of my way.

MICKEY
(Wailing)
What'll I do with my pup tent?

JUPITER

(Growling)
I'll pull it down over your ears ---

WILLIE

(Whimpering)
How about my cook-stove?

JUPITER

I'll fry you in it. Get out of my way.

DAVEY

(With a hurt look in his eyes)
Johnny - you never talked like that to us before.

JUPITER

Get used to it.

PEGGY

(Runs forward to protect DAVEY - speaks angrily to JUPITER)
Don't bully these children. You did promise. I heard you.

JUPITER

(Wheels on her angrily)
I heard you too.
(Tries to imitate her voice)
Will you enter the contest for my sake?
(Answering her)
Darn tootin' I heard you. And I'm in up to my chin whiskers.
(Seizes her arm roughly)
Now you come along and watch me win.

ACT ONE

Scene 11

Section of the Rodeo Grounds.

A section of the contest area lights up. Three bucking chutes in a row could be viewed and we might have a dance number indicating the broncs leaping out of the chutes mounted by cowboys, some being tossed off before the eleven second period. Then a few personal contests between JUPITER and ROY. One, Indian wrestling, in which JUPITER nearly breaks the wrist of ROY, and, two, a shooting contest in which JUPITER shoots with the skill of Annie Oakley.

Our main contestants move away to another part of the grounds but the announcer, in full view of the audience, reveals the score through a loud-speaker.

ANNOUNCER

Roy just roped and tied a calf in fourteen seconds.

(This is greeted with cheers. Then we hear the clatter of hooves and through the louder cheers)

Johnny just roped and tied a calf in nine seconds.

(Beyond on the rodeo grounds pandemonium breaks loose)

It looks like Johnny is the winner. Folks meet the new Johnny Jupiter.

(Thunderous shouts and acclamations greet this announcement and JUPITER swaggers on stage followed by ROY whose right arm hangs like a broken wing. Behind them, a stream of tourists and natives of Trumpet River. While JUPITER basks in the adulation PEGGY separates GABE from the rest of the people.

Spot centers on them for quick scene)

PEGGY
(With real alarm)
Uncle Gabe - there's something weird about Johnny - he frightens me.

GABE
He don't frighten me.
(Now quoting her - half-closing his eyes)
He's just provin' to me what a grown man can do - risk everything for the woman he loves - for the world he wants to lay at her feet.

PEGGY
But it scares me - it's so sudden -

GABE
True - he went from boy to man - like that -
(He snaps his fingers)
Up pops the devil.
(He laughs)

PEGGY
I don't like it.

GABE
(Urging her forward)
Go ahead, Peggy - get in line with the other girls. He'll be choosing his queen.

(FLIP rushes out, gets JUPITER's attention and tries to pose him)

FLIP
Stand right there Johnny. First a picture of the winner.

(His bulb flashes and JUPITER is caught unawares. He reels back and seems to be terrified)

(Laughing)
Hey - that scare you?

JUPITER
Scared the stuffing out of me --
(He reaches back as if to literally re-stuff something inside of him -- relieved)
But I'm all in one piece now.

ACT ONE

Scene 12

Back to first setting.
The ceremony of JUPITER JONES choosing his queen.

As is the custom in Trumpet River for the Jamboree, a half dozen of the prettiest girls are lined up, each one willing and eager to be the queen. JUPITER JONES must lasso the one he chooses to carry out the image of roping and stealing her.

JUPITER stands at the required distance, twirling his rope, flings it and loops it around PEGGY's waist. But as he starts to pull her towards him she draws out a pocket-knife and snips off the rope.

There is immediate consternation and confusion among the committee and the spectators.

JUPITER
What is it, Peggy? Why'd you cut that rope?

PEGGY
I -- I don't exactly know.

JUPITER
You trying to shame me?

PEGGY
No - no, Johnny -

JUPITER
Then why?

PEGGY
(Still in a frightened voice)
I told you - I don't know.

JUPITER
Didn't you want me to enter all the contests?

PEGGY
(Slowly)
Yes.

JUPITER
Didn't you want me to win?

PEGGY
Yes. But --

JUPITER
But what?

PEGGY
(Looks around her)
Now I'm frightened.

JUPITER
What frightens you?

PEGGY
You -- and Roy. He's your enemy now. He'll stop at nothing for revenge.

JUPITER
(Calmly)
I'll kill him first --

PEGGY
That's what I mean. I want you to win - but I don't want you to hate and kill.

JUPITER
You can't have one without the other.

PEGGY
Then I'd rather you'd lose - yes, I know for sure now - I changed my mind. I liked you better when you were a peace-loving man.

(PEGGY sings a song about
'I Changed My Mind')

JUPITER
(Irritably)
That's a hot one.
(Grabs her roughly)
You gotta like me the way I am. I won't let you change your mind.

(He kisses her - she slaps him,
but this only makes him chuckle
gleefully)

PEGGY

(Looks at him fearfully)

There's something about you now that scares me. You're not yourself, Johnny.

(She moves toward him pleadingly, hands outstretched)

Whatever got into you - get rid of it.

(Then on the verge of tears)

I love you, Johnny. I promise you I'll marry you. I'll never ask you to be anybody else -

(She moves closer to him)

If you'll just be yourself.

JUPITER

It's too late.

(Then his voice grows stronger, angrier)

It's for your sake that I'm a changed man. I'm JUPITER JONES.

(Then in a strange voice as the real JUPITER JONES takes possession of him)

You wanted JUPITER JONES? You'll get JUPITER JONES.

(There is a greenish halo around him.

As he tries to seize her in order to kiss her she flings her hands against his chest and pushes him away)

PEGGY

(Shrieks as if for a lightning second she had caught a true glimpse of him)

No - no - no. I'll have nothing to do with you until you're Johnny again - the Johnny I knew, the Johnny I loved.

C U R T A I N

ACT TWO

Scene 1

JOHNNY's room at the Pokey-Nine. But it's JUPITER JONES, temporarily on his own, who occupies JOHNNY's bed. He lies there snug, secure and comfortable. A perturbed JOHNNY walks in without bothering to knock.

JOHNNY
(Desperately)
I've got to talk to you, Jupiter.

JUPITER
(Sitting up stretching)
Let me rest man. I'm kinda tuckered out. Ain't had so much activity in years - and just between you and me...
(He lowers his voice)
It takes a little while to get used to the sunshine.

JOHNNY
(Insistently)
Got to talk to you now.

JUPITER
Talk man, and I'll listen.

JOHNNY
I want out - I mean - I want you out - completely.

JUPITER
Why? What for? You made a deal - you got to be Jupiter Jones. You're the hero of Trumpet River.

JOHNNY
But I didn't get Peggy.

JUPITER
Oh, that's what gripes you.
(Chuckling)
You threw in your hand too soon, man. You don't know wimmin like I do. I never paid no mind to what they said or did. They give their word and break it.
(He shakes his head)
No character. Shucks, man - they always holler an' scratch an' kick an' carry on like the devil - they got to. <u>But</u> --
(And he wags his finger knowingly)

JUPITER (Cont'd)
-- the rougher you handle 'em - the better they like it --
They jest playin' hard to git - Ohh, them wimmin.

JOHNNY
Not Peggy. She knows her mind, and she sure declared it.

JUPITER
Didn't I hear it? But I'm telling you she's jus' stringin' you, man.

JOHNNY
I still want - I mean - you out.

JUPITER
Supposing I was to do that. Did you stop to think of the consequences?

JOHNNY
I'm only interested in one. Status quo. The way things were.

JUPITER
Can't be - can't never be. With me - you're Jupiter Jones. Alone - you're what you was. Give up now - an' you'll be the laughin' stock of Trumpet River.

JOHNNY
I don't care. I'll confess. I'll say I made a deal with the...

JUPITER
(Cutting across him)
Just listen to yourself man. Nobody's believe you. And before you're through confessin' - they'd have you off to the crazy house.

JOHNNY
Anything would be better than this.

JUPITER
(Sternly)
Can't do it, man. I've been looking forward to this a long time. You'll never know what I had to do to get this chance.
(Then with enthusiasm)
This is our big day. We still get us a saloon brawl, bank robbery, jail-break -

JOHNNY
(Cutting across him)
And a hanging.

JUPITER
(Quickly)
A mock hangin'.

JUPITER (Cont'd)
(Resumes indignantly)
Just put yourself in my position, man. They'd run me out of hell if I quit now. The eyes of all my new pardners are lookin' up at me - hungrily. You know there's mighty little entertainment down there. They're hankerin'!
(Shakes his head grimly)
Anyway - where I come from, there's a strict code of honor. No, you made a deal for the whole Jamboree, and I'm holdin' you to it.

JOHNNY
Then you won't get out?

JUPITER
Can't get out - we're in it right up to the noose.

JOHNNY
(Slowly)
Well then - at least with Peggy let me do the talking. Let me try to explain that when I grab her -- it isn't really me --
(He fumbles for words)
--that it's someone else -
(He fumbles some more. He's lost, he's mired)
that --

JUPITER
(In a kindly tone)
You see, man - it's mighty hard to explain. You'll only confuse her. And a mixed-up woman is worse than one who's not. But if it'll make you feel better I'll let you try.

JOHNNY
There's another thing bothering me - that's my Boy Scouts. I don't want you to rough-house them.
(He shakes his head sadly)
The way they looked at me when you yelled at them - kicked them out of the way.

JUPITER
Forget it, man and leave it to me. I'll make them love you again. You got my word - I'll make them happy.
(Then briskly)
And now I got to ask you to do something. The way you been carrying on - complainin' and whinin' to quit - I feel like you're halfway out.
(Briskly)
Now you take a running jump and join up again. Tight and solid! We got us a job to finish.
(JOHNNY starts to run towards the bed)

B L A C K O U T

ACT TWO

Scene 2

The square. Tourists and natives are standing under JOHNNY's window at the Pokey-Nine clamoring for JUPITER. They want to acclaim their hero.

HUTCH
(As he moves among the tourists with a tray full of little cloth sacks)
Folks, don't forget your souvenir of the Rodeo. These little sacks here - go for only three bucks each.

TOURIST
(His kid has dragged him over)
What's in them?

HUTCH
Dirt, man - sacred dirt. What the bronco fell into when Jupiter roped him.

KID
Daddy - buy me one.

TOURIST
(Sadly as he hands over the money)
Three dollars for a sack of dirt.
(He shakes his head)
Some bandit!

(Off to one side, FLIP is now showing SUZIE some of the pictures he took)

FLIP
(Earnestly)
Suzie, don't say a word to anybody - but there's something strange about the pictures I took.

SUZIE
(Impishly)
I look pretty?

FLIP
I don't mean you. I'm talking of Jupiter Jones. Look again, Suzie. This is serious.

(He shows her the photographs)

SUZIE

What do you mean?

FLIP

Can't you see? All my shots came out clear -
(Lowers his voice)
except the ones of Jupiter Jones.
(In a whisper)
Every time he shows up - there's a ring around him -
(Shows her)
Look -

SUZIE

A halo.

FLIP

I wouldn't exactly call it that. It's a black ring - right around his neck.

SUZIE

Maybe you didn't shoot them right.

FLIP

(Indignantly)
I shoot everything right.
(He indicates the pictures)
The others are perfect.

SUZIE

Then - what can it mean?

FLIP

I don't know - it's mighty strange - but it's there all right and I've got to find out why.

(Possibility of song THE CAMERA NEVER LIES)

B L A C K O U T

ACT TWO

Scene 3

Back in JOHNNY's room. JUPITER is dressing when there is a knock on his door. The door opens and ROY enters. A crestfallen ROY.

JUPITER
What do you want?

ROY
(Softly, as if laying down a proposition)
Now look here, Johnny.

JUPITER
(Quickly)
Call me Jupiter Jones.

ROY
(Impatiently)
Johnny - Jupiter - what's the difference?

JUPITER
You found out.

ROY
Okay then Jupiter. But don't let it go to your head.
(Then thinking out loud)
I still don't know how you did it. The riding - the roping - the rassling.
(Confronting him)
You been studying that Judo stuff on the sly? And who learned you to ride like that?

JUPITER
(Coolly)
You lookin' for a teacher - or to talk to me?

ROY
I want some talk - serious talk.

JUPITER
Well, speak up. What do you want? I beat you fair and square.

ROY
(Nursing his bruise and shaking his head)
You beat me. Period. How I'll never know.

JUPITER
(Triumphantly)
That makes me JUPITER JONES for the whole JAMBOREE.

ROY
That's what I want to talk to you about.
(He comes closer to him)
I'll give you a thousand dollars -
(He takes out a roll of bills)
You see - ten brand new one hundred dollar bills - if you disappear and let me be JUPITER JONES.

JUPITER
(Laughs at him mockingly)
I used to leave bills like that around just for visiting cards.

ROY
All right, I'll get it for you in gold.

JUPITER
(Shakes his head)
I got plenty of gold stashed away in all these hills. You remember the Pony Express robbery back in '83 - with all that bouillon. - an' the Wells-Fargo - an' those wagon trains -

ROY
(Impatiently)
Quiet now. You don't have to play JUPITER JONES to me.

JUPITER
I ain't play-actin'.
(Then sternly)
Anyway, the answer is no.

(ROY moves still closer)

ROY
I'll give you Peggy.

JUPITER
She ain't yours to give - and I already won her.

ROY
(Surrendering)
Okay, you bandit. You must have been snooping around Dalton's desk at the bank. I'll let you in on the big deal. I'll split my share on all we make on the Jupiter Jones Economy Size Complete Desperado Outfit.

JUPITER
So that's what you thieves are up to.

ROY
Come on - you know we're shootin' for the big money.

JUPITER
Well not on my good name.

ROY
(Exasperated)
What's so important about playing Jupiter Jones? The tourists made him a hero so we milk the tourists. But you and I know he was a bum and crook and a murderer.

(JUPITER clouts him and knocks him down)

JUPITER
You're insulting the favourite son of Trumpet River - Jupiter Jones.

ROY
(Bitterly, as he gets up)
Okay, I'm convinced. You're loco. Plain loco. And there's only one way to deal with a lunatic.
(He runs out)

B L A C K O U T

ACT TWO

Scene 4

Back to the Square.
The people are still clamoring for JUPITER.

There is a splinter of glass and JUPITER leaps out of the Pokey-Nine window with a blood-curdling yahoo. At once he is surrounded by admirers and the Boy Scouts. One aggressive admirer gets to him with an autograph book.

ADMIRER
(Extending book and pen)
Mr. Jupiter Jones would you please sign my autograph book?

JUPITER
(Takes the pen and suddenly his hand freezes. Then, dropping it and laughing it off)
I can't write. Never had much book larnin'.

(He laughs and hands the book back. As he moves away the Boy Scouts timorously come closer to him)

DAVEY
Johnny - will you get mad if I ask you something?

JUPITER
No. I never get mad.

DAVEY
You did before.

JUPITER
(Winking)
I had to. I was only trying to throw a scare into Roy. Now you just ask me anything you like.

DAVEY
(Triumphantly, to the other kids)
You see, I told you.
(Then to JUPITER)
Will you take us on the hike?

JUPITER

(Shakes his head)
I can't leave the grounds.

(The kids now turn triumphantly on DAVEY)

KIDS

You see! We told you.

JUPITER

(Quickly)
But I tell you what I'll do. I'll larn you something more important than bird calls - woodcraft - more important than doin' good deeds every day.

KIDS

What's that?

JUPITER

I'm goin' to larn you kids how to draw fast.

(JUPITER in doggerel gives the awed kids a demonstration of how to draw fast and the various occasions upon which it is a matter of life and death)

(Begins speaking in rhythm and suiting action to words)
You're at a bar - a stranger walks in - you look through the mirror - you recognize him and he recognizes you. He's poison. His hands move down to his holster - you swing around and draw fast - you draw fast, 'cos you got ta beat him to the draw if you wanna live.

(Inspired by their admiration, he goes on to a second critical occasion)

You're in a poker game - you're dealt two aces and three kings - it's table stakes - the bet is big. You lay your hand down and you reach in to rake in the chips when the gambler with the silk vest says, "Hold on pardner," and he lays down three aces full - you draw fast 'cos you got to beat him to the draw if you wanna live.

(Again the jubilant imitation of the kids inspires JUPITER to a final stanza)

You're with a girl you hate to lose - her dad moves in with the sad, sad news. He found out you had a wife and three kids. He calls you on that and even though you hate to do it

JUPITER (Cont'd)
you draw fast 'cos you got to beat him to the draw if you wanna live.

(At the end of these demonstrations of drawing fast, the kids flock around JUPITER gratefully)

Now jes' play 'round and practice the fast draw. When you got that quick and smooth - I'll larn you how to rob a bank.

KIDS
(Gratefully)
Thanks, Johnny.

JUPITER
But don't go far 'cos I might want you to do something for me.

KIDS
(Devotedly)
You jes' tell us - and we'll do it.

(They scatter around and begin to pester and menace the tourists with their new gun skill. VINEY and GABE come out)

VINEY
(In his oratorical voice)
I guess we don't have to worry about the fighting blood of Trumpet River. It's in all our men. Johnny proved it.

GABE
He sure did. He sure did.

ACT TWO

Scene 5

ANNOUNCER

(Mounts a stand - bellows through an amplifier)

Folks - and now we come to the most important part of our programme. The re-enactment of the last day on earth of our beloved Jupiter Jones. He was restless that afternoon. Just plumb full of spirits. He started easy with a little saloon brawl.

(A scrim curtain lifts on the saloon. Typical western scene. A few cowboys are at the bar. Others are gambling. The busy girl entertainers in traditional long net stockings and generous cleavage are doing their best to separate the cowboys from their money. Into the saloon comes JUPITER JONES, the mysterious stranger. All eyes follow him as he walks to the bar. The bartender exchanges a look with the deputy marshal and then appraises JUPITER)

JUPITER

(In a brisk command)

Whiskey -

BARTENDER

(Suspiciously)

Stranger here?

JUPITER

Mebbe. I said Whiskey.

BARTENDER

(Slowly putting a bottle down)

What's your business, stranger?

JUPITER

Ain't tellin'.

BARTENDER

(Quickly removing bottle)

Ain't servin'.

(Quick as a flash, JUPITER, without turning round, only looking through the mirror, and shooting over his shoulder, shoots a poker hand out of

a card-player's mitt)

JUPITER
(Crisply at the same time)
Ferguson - you're cheatin'! But it's the last time.

FERGUSON
You're lyin', Jupiter - you're lyin'.

(As the bartender grabs hold of a bottle, two of the card players rise menacingly. At once, JUPITER JONES swings around and the brawl gets off the ground. Segues into a dance. When the saloon has been shot up and wrecked single handed by JUPITER the scrim curtain falls.

As the tourists applaud, HUTCH moves among them trying to sell them splinters of the broken glass)

HUTCH
Come closer folks an' get your souvenirs of the saloon brawl. Genuine broken western glass - two bucks a splinter.

(The son yanks his father over for another souvenir. Then EUDORA comes out half dragging GABE with her)

EUDORA
(Triumphantly)
Well, what have you got to say about Johnny now?

GABE
(Shaking his head)
Not a word. I've been struck plumb dumb.

EUDORA
And don't you ever tell me anything about courage.

GABE
(Meekly)
I sure won't, Eudora.

EUDORA
Why - Johnny showed more courage than Jupiter Jones himself.

GABE
I wasn't here then.

EUDORA
(Snapping)
Neither was I --

GABE
I didn't say you was - and just let me finish - even if I was here - I'd sure agree with you.

EUDORA
You better.

GABE
Johnny surprises me - he goes deep - he must have something inside him that nobody knows about.

EUDORA
Courage. That's what he's got inside. Courage. Guts.

GABE
(Agreeing)
He sure has.

EUDORA
And I wish some of it would rub off on you - you miserable worm.

GABE
(With a sudden surprising show of manhood)
Don't you call me names.

EUDORA
I will until you marry me.

GABE
Then you'd better quit now. I feel something inside of me. Maybe it's courage. I feel it growing and growing. It makes me feel strong and heady.

(GABE sings a song with EUDORA I GOT COURAGE NOW)

(He seizes her possessively)
Come along you. I got the courage to marry you - and I will right after the Jamboree.

EUDORA
(Beginning to faint in his outstretched arm)
Gabe, oh Gabe.
(As she completes her faint)

B L A C K O U T

ACT TWO

Scene 6

An office inside the bank. DALTON, CLINT and a very depressed ROY.

DALTON
(Bitterly to ROY)
So you're sure to win.

CLINT
(Imitating ROY's cocky voice and manner)
I can out-ride, out-shoot, out-rope...

DALTON
(Finishing the sentence angrily)
and out-lie any hombre in Texas.
(Angrily to ROY)
What happened?

ROY
(Miserably)
I don't rightly know.
(Puzzled to the point of tears)
I just can't figure it out. Makes no sense. One minute he was shaking with fear. The next - well you saw what happened.
(Woefully)
Makes no sense.

CLINT
Maybe not to you. But to us - it spells disaster. We backed you on your braggin' word - we put our good money on the line for you. We made commitments - might wreck the bank to live up to them, all because you were so blamed sure you'd win. Now you let us down. You lost.

ROY
(Miserably)
I talked to him in his room - tried to buy him off - but he's worse than a mule.
(Rubs his chin reminiscently)
I tell you he's plain loco.

CLINT
Loco or not - he's Jupiter Jones.
(He stands up)
We'd better make a quick deal with him.

ROY

(Pleading)

Not yet. Give me a little time. I ain't thrown in my hand yet.

DALTON

(Skeptically)

What've you got left to play with?

ROY

(Mysteriously)

An ace in the hole.

(Pleading)

I'm only asking for a little time. Just let me play that ace in the hole.

B L A C K O U T

ACT TWO

Scene 7

ANNOUNCER
And now folks - That little saloon brawl got JUPITER hankerin' for a little more action. This brings us to the bank robbery.

(The scrim curtain rises and reveals the inside of the bank proper. The entire hold-up is done as a dance number. JUPITER single handed stages the hold-up in true Western style while the tourists and gapers look on awed and highly entertained. When he makes his get-away, ROY and his quickly assembled posse, give pursuit. Just as it is called for in the script.

As the tourists disperse, some running after the Posse, PEGGY stands there in obvious distress. SUZIE comes out of the Museum, notices her and stops to chat)

SUZIE
Well, Peggy - you should feel mighty pleased with Johnny -

PEGGY
Should - but I don't.

SUZIE
But he's risking every bone in his body for your sake - just to get you --

PEGGY
(Sadly)
I know - that's what makes it worse. I feel terrible.
(More intimately)
Tell me something, Suzie --

SUZIE
(Sympathetically)
Sure, honey -

PEGGY
You've had a lot of experience with men --

SUZIE

(Quickly)
Not enough -

PEGGY

I mean you've studied them more than I have --

SUZIE

It's my life-work.

PEGGY

How can I get Johnny to quit?

SUZIE

But it was you who started him.

PEGGY

Now I want him to stop.

SUZIE

You mean quit cold - and become a laughing-stock -

PEGGY

Not exactly -

SUZIE

You mean - prove he could win - and then run away from first prize?

PEGGY

Not exactly -

SUZIE

You mean - Do only what you want him to do - like a puppet on a string -

PEGGY

Not exactly.
(Then half-sobbing)
I don't know what I mean but I know what I want. I --

(Song:)
What do I want in a man
I want him to be tall
and I want him to be small
I want him strong
and sometimes weak.

SUZIE

(Cuts in)
But one thing you want is that he is yours.

PEGGY

(Quickly)
Yes I want him to be mine.

(At the end of the song)

SUZIE
(Sympathetically)
Peggy, if it's any consolation to you, a woman changing her mind is as natural as day changing into night. And I'm sure Johnny will understand that. Ask him again.

PEGGY
I'll do that. Yes, I will. I will.

B L A C K O U T

ACT ONE

Scene 8

A cave. JUPITER is resting when ROY comes in alone.

JUPITER
Where's the posse?

ROY
Left them outside. Want to talk to you - alone. Man to man.

JUPITER
You did already. Now what's eating you?

ROY
You. Pulled a switch on me. Caught me off balance. Upset all my plans. Made me the laughing stock of Texas.

JUPITER
Is that what you came to see me about? To have a good cry?

ROY
No. I just want to improve my proposition. And then I want you to get lost. Fade out of the picture. When you don't show up - I'll finish as Jupiter Jones.

JUPITER
(Toying with him)
I couldn't disappoint all those tourists. They don't want you. They want me.

ROY
If you get lost - they'll have to take me.

JUPITER
That wouldn't be honest.
(Sarcastically)
But that wouldn't bother a crook like you.

ROY
(Doggedly)
Aside from all the money - and I'm prepared to cut you in on everything - a fifty-fifty partner with me - money this year - money next year - money rolling in for a long time.

JUPITER
(Shakes his head vigorously)
I got no interest in the future.
(Then firmly)
Anyway - I stay Jupiter Jones - all the way through.

ROY

(Slowly, grimly)

You better listen to me good, Johnny. You're Jupiter Jones all right - all the way up to the hanging.

JUPITER

That's right - the mock hanging.

ROY

(With mysterious menace in his voice)

Mock hanging?

JUPITER

That's what the script calls for.

ROY

(Slowly)

I know - but we could have an accident.

JUPITER

What d'ye mean, accident?

ROY

(Smoothly)

I could get carried away.

(Now he begins to describe what might happen dramatically)

Just follow me for a minute, Johnny.

(He begins to act the ensuing scene)

Here I am, head of the posse. I've got Jupiter Jones - roped. The crowd is cheering. They've had the saloon brawl and the bank robbery. They crave a climax. They are crying for a hanging - and I'm goin' to give it to them. I drag you to the tree - I make a loop around the limb - I put the noose around your neck - I kick your legs free. The excitement gets them. The excitement gets me - I tighten the rope.

(Now he shouts exultantly)

Then you swing.

(Pauses)

Now comes the time to cut you down.

(He shakes his head sadly)

but it's too late.

JUPITER

What d'ye mean, it's too late?

ROY

Because you're dead.

(Then he pauses and his voice is lowered)

Yeah! Jest remember that Johnny. In all that excitement - we could have an accident. Yes, I certainly could get carried away.

B L A C K O U T

ACT ONE

Scene 9

Back to Square.

ANNOUNCER
Folks - the posse's got Jupiter Jones. And now you'll see an example of good old western justice.

(Off stage we hear ROY's voice)

ROY
Drag him in.

(JOHNNY is dragged in by ROY and his ferocious looking posse)

TWO MEMBERS OF THE POSSE
Let's string 'im up now.

ROY
Not a bad idea. It's time to hang him.

(Murmurs of approval from the posse)

PEGGY
(Excitedly)
Wait. He's entitled to a trial.

ROY
(After a look at her)
So we give him a trial - a western trial.
(He looks around and picks out an old seamy booze befuddled bum)
Hey! How'd you like to be the judge?

(The crowd laughs)

DRUNKARD
Need a drink first.

(Somebody gives him a bottle and he takes a big swig)
That's good whiskey.

ROY
(Impatiently)
You'll guzzle later. Go ahead you --

DRUNKARD
(With sudden dignity)
Call me Judge Fumger.

ROY
Okay, Judge Fumger - proceed.

DRUNKARD
(He turns to ROY)
What's the prisoner charged with?

ROY
What's the difference?

DRUNKARD
(Blinks and takes another swig from the bottle)
That's a good point of law.
(Then he glares at JUPITER, and in a loud judicial voice)
Jupiter Jones - I find you guilty as charged.

(Throughout all this FLIP is taking pictures of the trial, while SUZIE stands near him)

ROY
(To PEGGY)
Are you satisfied? He had a fair trial and was found guilty. And if you know your Trumpet River history - that's just the way it happened.

MEMBER OF THE POSSE
(Pleading like a child)
Now can we swing him up?

OTHER MEMBERS OF THE POSSE
Let's hang him.

PEGGY
(Interferes again)
Wait. Jupiter Jones got time to write out his will.

ROY
(Sarcastically)
He couldn't write.

PEGGY
So he dictated it to his girl.

JUPITER
That's right - that's just what he did.

PEGGY
Take the noose off his neck - I'll write down what he says.

ROY
(Looks from one to the other)
Okay. You get five minutes.
(Chuckling)
It'll take that long to test the limb of the hanging tree.
(To the members of his posse)
Watch him.

(ROY followed by all the rest walk over to the tree. The stage darkens. A shadow seems to flit towards the Statue)

JUPITER
Well, Johnny, my time is running out. I reckon this is where I begin to leave you. From here in, you're on your own.

(Now a small light centers on PEGGY and JOHNNY)

JOHNNY
(He's now himself)
Thanks, Peggy. Thanks to your quick thinking we can at least say goodbye.

PEGGY
There's no time for that. You've got to run away.

JOHNNY
I can't run away. I'm Jupiter Jones and the script calls for a hanging.

PEGGY
A mock hanging.
(Moves closer to him)
But from what I know about Roy --

JOHNNY
(Shakes his head)
There won't be anything mock about this.

PEGGY
(Earnestly)
That's why I want you to get away.

JOHNNY
I can't.

JOHNNY (Cont'd)
(Then, almost accusingly)
You wanted me to be Jupiter Jones --

PEGGY
(Tears in her eyes)
It's true, I did - but I didn't want you hung, and I know that that's what Roy has in mind. He's going to hang you dead and then claim it was an accident.

JOHNNY
That's just what he told me.

PEGGY
Then you've got a right to run away.

JOHNNY
(Sadly)
I can't, Peggy. He told ie to me - and maybe you found out about it....
(He shakes his head again)
but he didn't tell it to all these folks - yes, all these strangers and people who came here for the Jamboree - he didn't tell it to them. What will they think? And what will become of the legend of the great Jupiter Jones? The town hero - and the town industry. Yeah - Jupiter Jones running out of a mock hanging - the coward. He will be the laughing stock of the country and so will I. The Jamboree will be a farce and I'll never be able to show my face again in Trumpet River.

PEGGY
I don't care. We'll leave Trumpet River. We'll go East and get married. Forget the whole thing. Anything as long as you're mine.

JOHNNY
(Gently)
We can't, Peggy. We were born in Trumpet River, it's in our blood, it's tradition is ours, including Jupiter Jones. No matter where we go, we could never forget it.

PEGGY
(Defiantly)
I tell you we could. Our love is strong enough. We could.

JOHNNY
Even so - how about my boys? For two years I've been their leader, teaching them truth, honesty - courage. They believe in me. What will they think if I chicken out now?
(He shakes his head grimly)
No, Peggy, no.

PEGGY

(Tears in her eyes)
Johnny, you're being foolish - and brave.

JOHNNY

No. You're giving me credit for more than I am. I'm just doing what I have to do.

(REPRISE of the song in Act One about JOHNNY being brave - being the duet)

PEGGY

(Flings her arms round JOHNNY's neck and kisses him)
Goodbye, Johnny. Goodbye.

(All the lights come up as ROY and his posse move forward towards JOHNNY)

ANNOUNCER

Well, folks, we're ready for the piece de resistance - the hanging -

(From the tourists comes a deep roar of excitement)

ROY

(To his posse)
Get the rope around him and drag him to the tree.

(The posse obeys this command. Near the tree the group of kids are standing watching the proceedings with deep interest)

ROY

(To the kids)
Did you get the box?

DAVEY

Oh yes.

(He indicates a box which has been placed against the base of the tree trunk)

ROY

(To the posse)
Stand him up.

(They lift JOHNNY and stand him on the box, the noose around his neck. JOHNNY looks up at the tree towards the statue of JUPITER JONES, and half cries into the air)

JOHNNY
Hey! Jupiter, this should be your job.

JUPITER'S VOICE
(This voice, which can only be heard by JOHNNY, emerges from the statue)
Oh no! I went through it once - I'm not going through it again. I'm sorry, Johnny, you're on your own, anyway -
(The VOICE begins to fade)
anyway - my time is nearly up - nearly up.

ROY
(Comes close to JOHNNY)
What's the matter, Johnny? You must be pretty scared - you're talking to yourself. Afraid of a little mock hanging?
(Then he whispers)
Don't be a fool - its not too late to back out. Just faint - I'll make the explanations and take over.

JOHNNY
(Stoutly)
Oh no, you don't. Just go ahead.

PEGGY
He's entitled to a farewell speech.

ROY
(To PEGGY)
You're sure drawing out his agony.

PEGGY
(Stubbornly)
Well, Jupiter made one.

ROY
(To JOHNNY)
Okay. Make a speech - I'll give you another minute.

PEGGY
(Shouting to JOHNNY)
Tell them the truth - tell the folks the truth.

JOHNNY
No. I just want to say goodbye. Goodbye to all the folks - goodbye to all my boys - and goodbye to Trumpet River. If I had my choice of the world - I couldn't choose a better place to live in - or die in.

ANNOUNCER
(Shouting)
This is it, folks.

ROY
(Viciously, jubilantly)
Here goes!

ROY (Cont'd)
(He kicks the box hoping it will flip from under JOHNNY's feet, so that with the tightening of the noose he will be left hanging in the air. But instead - the box, which has been filled with concrete by the kids, just stands there. ROY howls with pain. The CROWD roars and the kids roll on the floor with laughter)

DAVEY
(Laughing, to JOHNNY)
We filled it with bricks, just like you told us ---

PEGGY
(Running in and pointing to ROY)
Roy meant to hang him for real, but he got what he deserved.

(As ROY attempts to get to his feet and push the box away so that JOHNNY will hang, there is a sudden crash of lightning and a bolt of thunder which cracks off the hanging libm of the tree. The limb falls on ROY and pins him to the ground)

PEGGY
(To GABE and the others)
Take the rope off - take the rope off.

(Helping hands immediately remove the noose and untie JOHNNY's wrists while he rubs them tenderly, they lead him away)

ANNOUNCER:
(To the CROWD)
Well, folks, this may not have been exactly the way it happened, but nobody can complain that they didn't see a mock hanging -

DALTON & CLINT
(To posse as they contemptuously point to ROY on the ground)
Pour some water on this poor bastard. He can't do anything right.
(As the posse obey them they move on to JOHNNY)

DALTON

(With CLINT nodding in agreement as he talks. His manner is umptious and full of admiration)

Johnny - you made a great Jupiter Jones. We never dreamed you had it in you. You handled the gun, the rope, the horse like a true son of the west. Trumpet River is mighty proud of you and...

(His voice is more confidential)

my partners and I would sure like to have a little talk with you. You deserve a prize - and we aim to give it to you.

PEGGY

(To DALTON and CLINT as she embraces JOHNNY)

If you don't mind - I'll talk to Johnny first.

JOHNNY

(To DALTON and CLINT as he returns PEGGY's embrace)

No point in talk. I got the only prize I want - and I sure aim to enjoy it.

(He kisses her. She responds. Their lips merge in a passionate kiss. Only this time it's PEGGY who grows limp and begins to swoon in JOHNNY's arms as ...

C U R T A I N